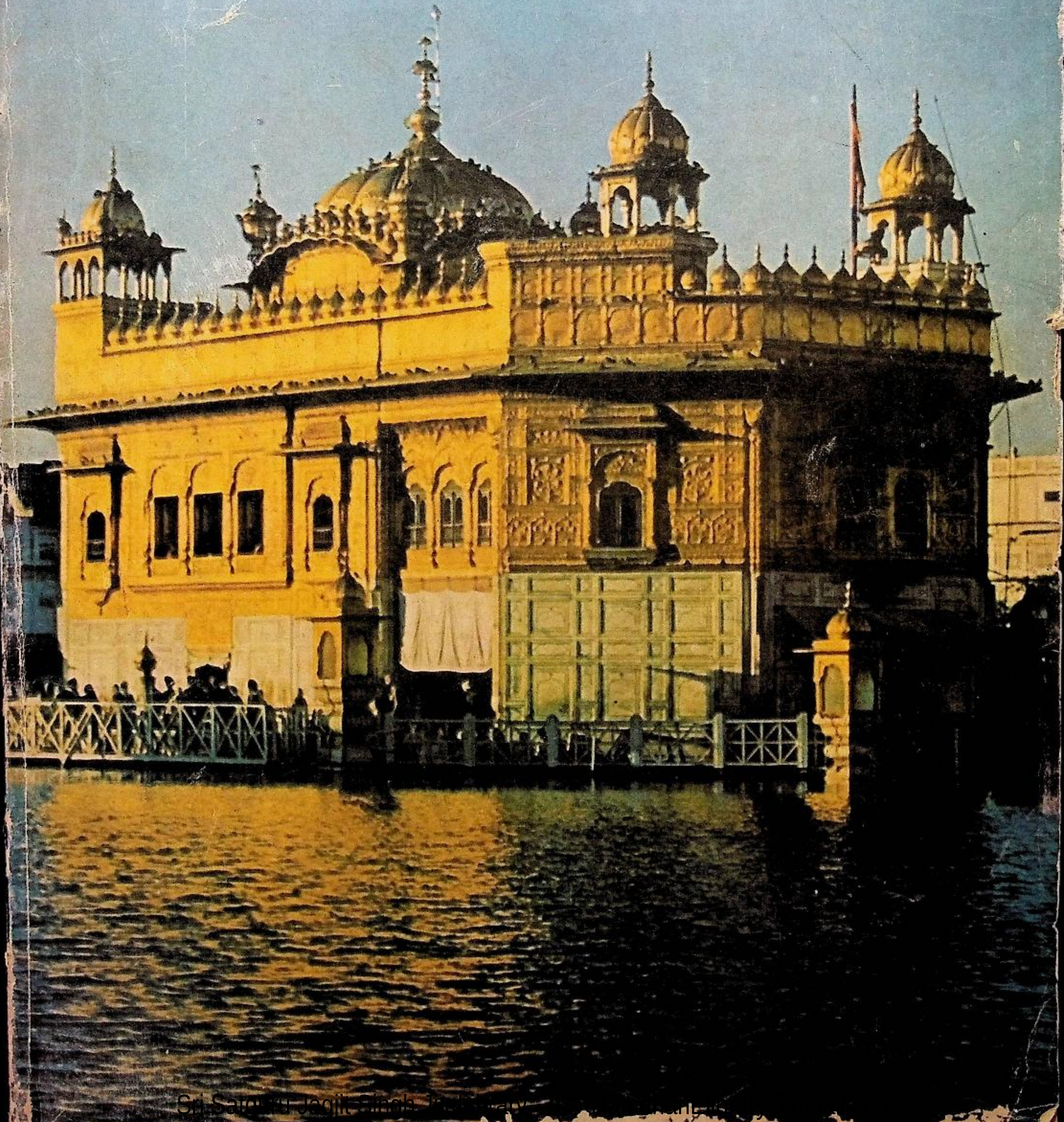
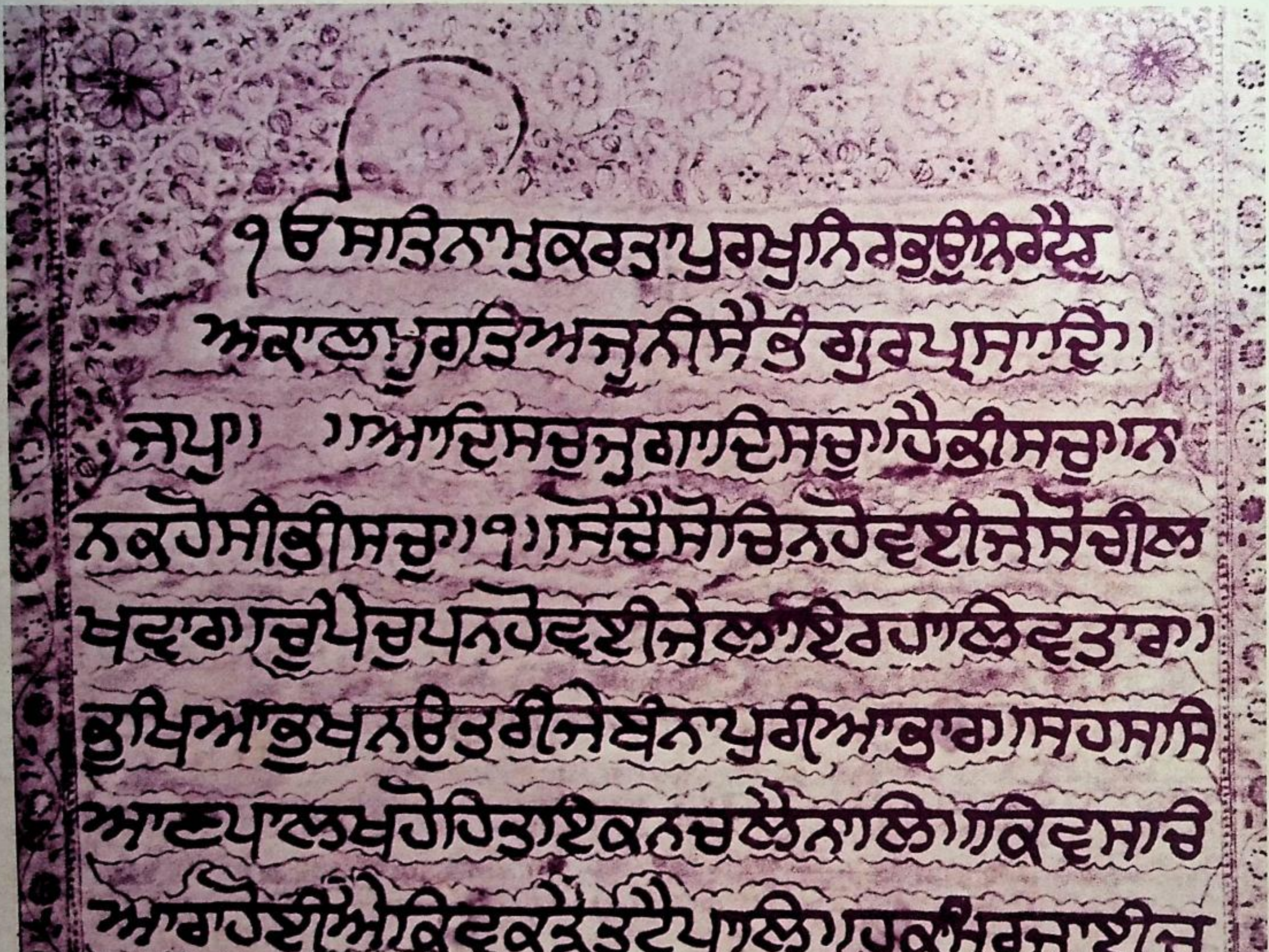
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The first page of the Guru Granth Sahib.



੧ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁਕਰਤਾਪੁਰਖੁਨਿਰਭਉਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
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CONTENTS

COVER: View of Golden Temple, Amritsar.

MARG offers homage to Amritsar on the occasion of the 400th Anniversary of this city. During the centuries, this complex of Sikh culture grew from a sacred village pond into a spiritual-temporal centre. The passionate pilgrims of the faith of Guru Nanak (15th century), who united Hindu and Muslim elements and initiated a reformation, flocked here generation after generation. The craftsmen of the North were involved in heightening the insights of religion by creating works in and through the daily life, which may exalt the devotees. The shining splendour of the Golden Temple is witness to the high skill of the traditional craftsmen.

We wish to thank Dr. M. S. Randhawa, Dr. W. G. Archer and Dr. B. N. Goswamy for benefits derived from their researches. Sardar Kanwarjit Kang gave of himself unstintedly throughout. Dr. Daljit Singh and Dr. Satwant Singh, highly talented photographers, experimented with visionary cameras for several months. Shri K. C. Aryan generously gave intimate advice on Amritsar culture. Mr. James P. Blair donated a masterly photograph of the interior of the Golden Temple.

Sardar Bishan Singh Samundari, Sardar Jagjit Singh and Professor Pritam Singh of Guru Nanak Dev University encouraged the MARG research team and gave generous hospitality.

Articles, photographs and drawings sent with a view to publication will be carefully considered, but the editors will not undertake responsibility for loss or damage. All articles and illustrations should bear the name and address of the sender, and postage should be sent to cover their return.

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Homage to Amritsar

Shining in the morning light, the gilded splendour
of its panellings and big dome and small minarets,
this temple is a fairy world palace to the devotees of the Sikh faith.
Certainly, the first look brings onto the innocent eye
the image of a transcendent fact.
The 'loving sight' peering into heaven from the legends of
the miraculous cures by the touch of the water in the pool of nectar,
in which the shrine stands, makes for ecstatic awareness.
The vision has been received by millions of pilgrims
who have come here for centuries from near and far.

The actual construction had modest beginnings:
A mud-house was constructed by Guru Amar Das, who is said to have found
on the edge of the pool the magical herb which cured a skin ailment
of his master Guru Angad.

The Amrit Sarovar remained a village tank,
until the fourth Guru Ram Das began to carry out the plans
of his mentor for a more permanent structure in brick.

Chak/Chak Guru/Guru-ka-chak/Chak Guru Ram Das/Ram Das Pura
were the names of Amritsar in those times.
And the temple on the banks of the pool of nectar was surrounded
by the houses of the craftsmen from the towns of Patti, Kasur and Kalanur,
who came to build the holy place. The only market was then called
Guru-ka-bazar, still known by that name, though more populous.

Guru Ram Das composed a poem in praise of Amrit Sarovar.

Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth master, who came to the spiritual throne
in 1581, felt from the growing popularity
of the shrine as a pilgrim centre the need
to have the tank paved on the four sides and the steps of Hari Mandir bricked.
The devotees joined to construct the temple,
which would be lived in during the everyday life,
where the infinite mystery would be revealed to those who may want to see.

Already, however, the demand to create a paradise on earth
became urgent, from the vision of Guru Arjan Dev,
of many simple hearts coming, with dipped eyes over joined hands,
to pray and touch the holy water on their foreheads.

So this Guru had the structure of the Hari Mandir
planned in such a way that the outsight might afford the insight.
The present causeway leading to the Hari Mandir was then designed,

with the rectangular shape of the circumambulatory walk
ending at the gateway, from which the path to Reality began.
And to combine, symbolically, the noblest truth of Islam about One God
with the faith in the Hindu God Hari and his many incarnations,
the Muslim divine, Mian Mir of Lahore, is said to have been invited by
Guru Arjan Dev to lay the foundation stone of the temple in A.D. 1588.

The structure of the shrine also mixed the rectangular form
of the Hindu temple with the dome and minarets of the Muslims.

Hallowed by the meditations of holymen,
the blood of martyrs defending the Sikh faith
against imperial oppression, a refuge to the sick and weary,
the faithful held on to the centre against many onslaughts
and the rhythms of the universal life seemed to secure the pilgrims
in the belief that the essential self exists in and through and
behind the flow of the obvious states.

And as the universe of calm survived
in the midst of all the inclemencies of change,
the first Sikh Emperor, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, made the pool of nectar
the spiritual capital,
while Lahore was the temporal seat of his newly founded kingdom.

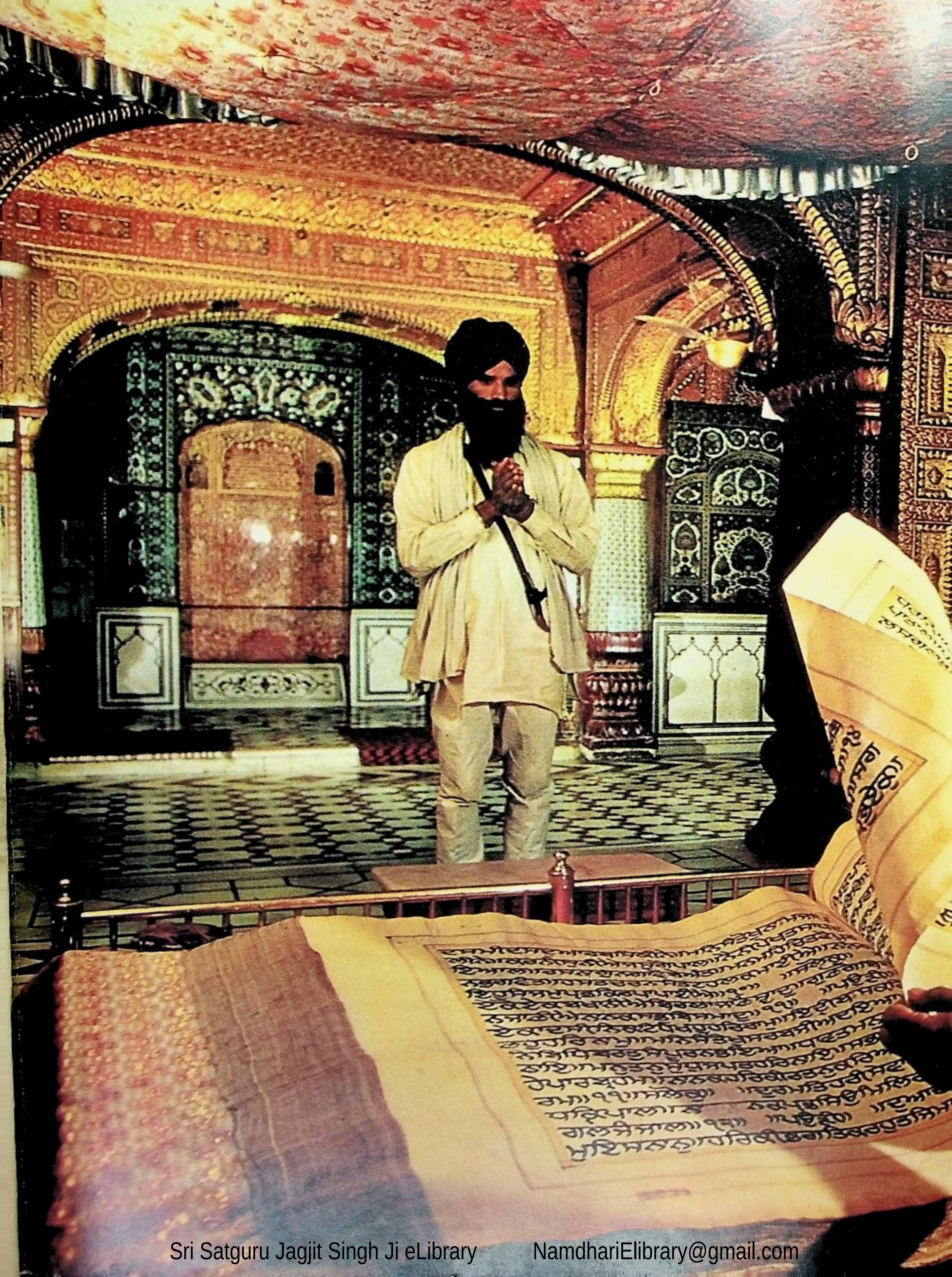
The gilding of the embossed plate, above the marble skirt
of the Hari Mandir, the renewal of the pietre dure,
the embellishment of the interior, with lovely ceilings,
adorned with floral reliefs and little mirrors,
were all renovated, finished and perfected
under the patronage of the great general,
so that men and women may brood upon the inner splendour,
after gazing at the beauty and wonder of the outer house and body of God.

The Sikhs have always retained, in spite of the militancy
they were forced to adopt to defend their order against the enemies
of their reformation, the injunction of Guru Nanak
that you can range from yourself to the stars and the moral law,
if you contemplate the Nam in the quiet of your heart.

As an eclectic monument, which has grown from the devotion of the folk,
as much as through the skill of the craftsmen of the guilds,
the Golden Temple achieves the kind of romantic glory
which flouts convention, answers to the mood of astonishment,
and compels humility before the inner sight.



1. *This engraving of the Golden Temple by a European artist shows the shrine as it was in mid nineteenth century, reproduced in the shimmer of light and water against the shadows of fleecy clouds. (Photo: Lance Dane)*

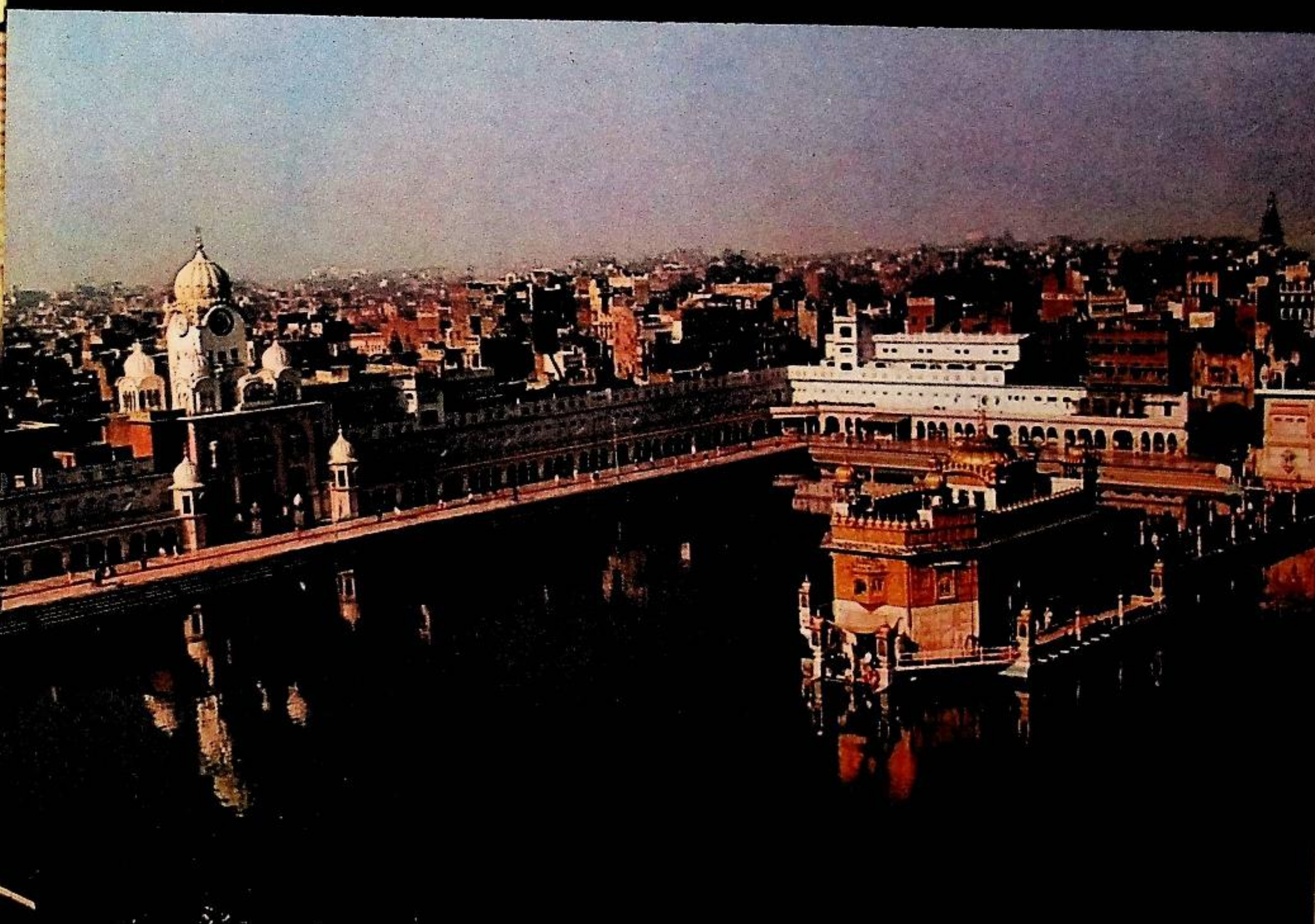






2. *This brilliant photograph of the interior of the Hari Mandir, with the* **Granthi** *turning the pages of the holy book, while a worshipper stands before the Gospel, animates the holy scene with a masterly grasp of depth into the spirit of the interior. (Photo: James Blair)*

3. *This panoramic view puts into focus the holy of holies as it appears in sunlight. The grated blue of the sky offsets the glare and the reflections in the greenish water and induces feelings of shadow and substance.*



3

Says Guru Nanak:

"There was an old legend in the Hindu puranas that the earth rests on the head of the bull.
"If there is a bull then its feet must be resting on another earth. And there must be another bull supporting that earth. Thus there will be no end to the bulls and the earths."

And he prayed:

"Oh Lord, thy regions are real
Thy universes are real
Thy planets are real
Thy creation is real."

The sense of wonder about samsara *involves prayer.*

And prayer can be uttered in arresting time and space in the symbolic shrine, where avidya, *or ignorance, disappears and the heart is filled with love for everything on earth.*



The Pool of Nectar

One of the most fascinating cities of northern India, Amritsar is also one of the most ancient and legendary sites in the Punjab. According to popular belief — which is doubtless of local origin — Valmiki wrote his celebrated epic, the *Ramayana,* near around this hallowed site of the "Pool of Nectar". It was here, too, that Sita stayed during the period of her *vanavasa* (banishment). Here again, the twin sons of Lord Rama, were taught the *Ramayana*. Yet another legend identifies the site of this pool with the place where the whole of Lord Rama's army was destroyed by his sons, Lava and Kusa, and relates how at that time a jug of nectar descended from heaven to restore the soldiers to life.

Valmiki's ashram, it is said, lay within a short distance of the renowned "Pool of Nectar". In Valmiki's time, the area was a thick forest. There were around Valmiki's ashram some more tanks with historical associations. One such hexagonal tank, Ram Tirth, is at a distance of around 11 kilometres from Amritsar; the others are Ramsar, Santokhsar, Ram Talai and Durgiana.

Guru Ram Das must have known the legendary importance of the place when he sanctified the pool of nectar in the sixteenth century. The Sikh faith founded by the saint Nanak, of which Ram Das was the fourth Guru, was, in essence, a catholic and all-embracing faith. It took in its stride the egalitarian traditions of Islam and blended them with the transcendental wisdom of Hindu thought.

Actually, it was in 1574 A.D., that Guru Ram Das made his home by the side of the pool, which was regarded as blessed with miraculous powers of healing. The place where the Guru lived was known as Guru-ka-Mahal.

In 1577, Guru Ram Das, finding the air and water of his abode health-giving, purchased the pool and some surrounding land from its owners, the neighbouring Jats. Several times, Emperor Akbar had himself offered the grant of twelve villages to the pool, but the Guru had, on every occasion, declined the gift.

One of the first acts of Guru Ram Das was to excavate the tank further, to construct a shrine at the centre.

On the first day of Magh Sankranti Vikrami Samvat 1645 (1588 A.D.), the foundation stone of this temple was laid by the renowned Muslim Sufi divine, Hazrat Mian Mir of Lahore, at the specific request of Guru Arjan Dev.

The followers of the Guru built their houses in the neighbourhood. And thus there speedily came into existence a small town called Ramdaspur. The town derived its later name, Amritsar, from the holy tank or the Pool of Immortality, in the centre of which now stands the Hari Mandir or Darbar Sahib — nowadays more commonly known as the Golden Temple.

The sacred building was completed by the son and successor of Guru Ram Das, Arjan Dev. In the lifetime of the fifth Guru, a flourishing town had begun to grow around the holy site. As the followers of Sikhism increased in number, the town grew in stature.

This holy site became the religious resort not only of the Sikhs but also of members of various communities seeking asylum from Imperial oppression. The Sikh Gurus encouraged all, irrespective of caste and creed, to come to reside in Amritsar. Thus an atmosphere of religious tolerance prevailed. And the city became a kind of refuge not only for holy men but for fighters of freedom.

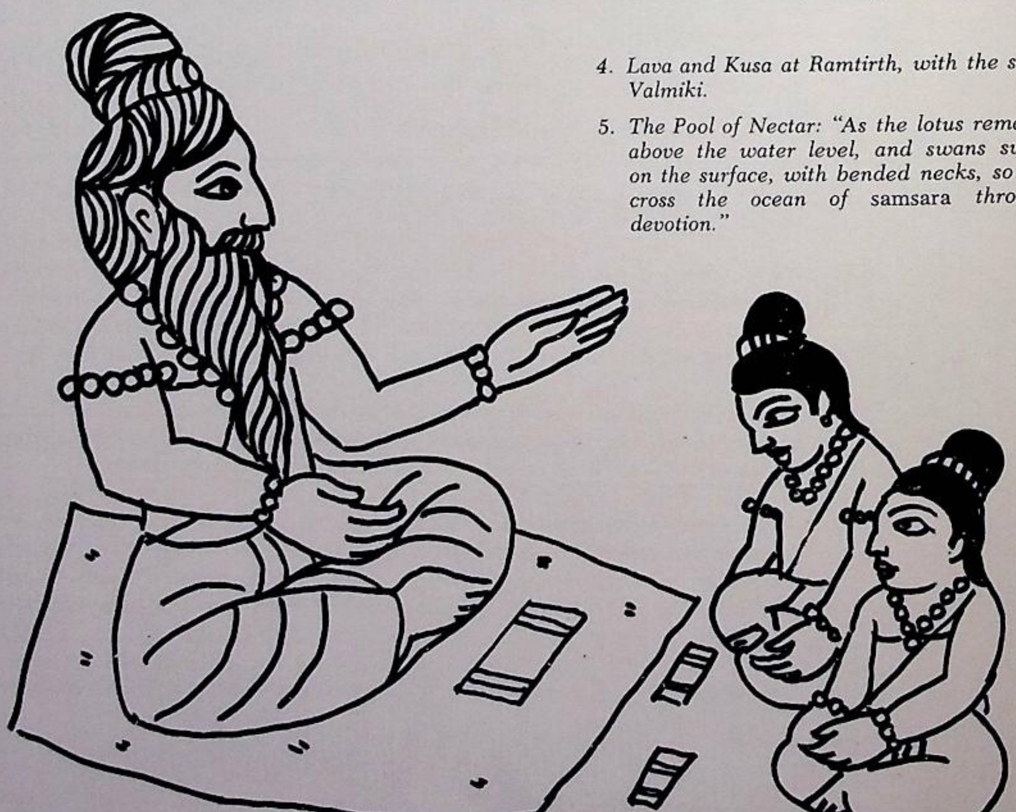
Writing in 1831, V. Jacquemont observes: "This Rome of the Punjab has no Pope; the

descendants of Nanak all live on the left bank of the Sutlej. The guardian of the sacred tank at Amritsar is only a rich sardar and the post is not hereditary in the family. According to my conductor, the present guardian S. Jiwan Singh refused to allow me within the enclosure marking the site of excavation of this celebrated pool, for the possession of which so many battles were fought in the Punjab in the last century. Many times the Mussalmans filled it with the ruins of the surrounding houses and soiled it with the victims of their cruel intolerance. But, when victory reopened to the Sikhs the gates of Amritsar, they carried out bloody reprisals and washed the steps of the sacred pool with the blood of Mussalmans. The two minarets which overlook it, though Muhammedan in style, were erected by the Sikhs not more than thirty years ago. Ranjit has a palace in the city on the edge of the pool; there are also others belonging to the leading Sardars of the Punjab."

By the second half of the eighteenth century, "the chiefs of different *misls* had gained influence over the city in separate small principalities or quarters called Katras, where they exercised their jurisdiction and executed civic administration. Assisted by Missar Chajju Mal, Sada Kaur ruled over Katra Kanhaiya; Sardar Jaimal Singh managed Katra Jaimal Singh, and Sardar Bhag Singh Bagha, a Sanskrit and Persian scholar and cannon-maker, was in charge of Katra Bhaggian. Katra Ramgarhia and Katra Ahluwalian were held jointly by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nawab Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the founder of Ahluwalia *misl* and of Kapurthala State. These chiefs built houses, Bungahs round the temple, roads, forts and bazars"

"The Ramgarhia *misl* was closely associated with the city of Amritsar. This *misl* took its name from Ram Rauni or 'Fortalice of God' at Amritsar, a mud work. . . .

"After Jassa Singh's death in 1803, a contract of friendship had been drawn up between Ranjit Singh and the Ramgarhia family at Amritsar before the Granth. Ranjit Singh stamped the



4. *Lava and Kusa at Ramtirth, with the sage Valmiki.*
5. *The Pool of Nectar: "As the lotus remains above the water level, and swans swim on the surface, with bended necks, so we cross the ocean of* samsara *through devotion."*



papers with his open palm dyed with saffron . . . went to the Ramgarh fort and succeeded in capturing it with his artillery." (*Amritsar Past and Present* by V. N. Datta, p. 23.)

It was in 1803 that this town was incorporated in the dominion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The cultural, economic and political development of Amritsar was largely the work of this monarch who took great pains to make it the spiritual capital as well as the main commercial and cultural centre of his kingdom, while Lahore remained the political capital. He encouraged a great many nobles of the Lahore court and big merchants to settle in Amritsar. He expended large sums on the construction of a number of buildings.

The Golden Temple, as it stands today, with its luminous exterior plated with gold is chiefly the work of Ranjit Singh. He ordered the architectural shape of the Golden Temple to be redesigned. He took deep interest in getting the temple artistically decorated. For this purpose the Maharaja, made a grant of Rs. 500,000 in 1803 A.D. and invited skilled Muslim architects, masons and wood-carvers from Chaniot, now in Pakistan. Yar Mohammad Khan Mistri was the technical expert for gold plating, carried out in 1830.

Thus a group of Muslim architects, masons, carvers and other craftsmen were brought to Amritsar and lodged in a huge building known as Haveli Chaniotian, situated inside the Lahori Gate. (The Haveli Chaniotian was situated in Kucha Tarkhana, Gali Qabarwali. During the riots of 1947, this Haveli, along with its adjoining mosque, was demolished. The ruins of the

mosque can still be seen there, but there are absolutely no remnants of the Haveli.) The entire Naqqashi (floral decoration) and Jaratkari (stone inlay) work was done by these artisans, under the supervision of Badaru-Mohiudin, the chief architect. After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the task of completing the work fell on three Sikhs – Bhagwan Singh Jamadar, Mangal Singh Ramgarhia and Rai Bahadur Kalyan Singh. Later, when the Muslim craftsmen emigrated through lack of patronage, the rest of the work was completed by local Sikh and Hindu artisans.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was fond of giving paintings, gold ornaments and fine textiles as gifts, in the course of his diplomatic dealings. Thus he had invited and patronised a number of skilled artisans and accomplished painters from the Pahari regions of Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Jodhpur. At his request, the Pahari painters (of whom only Parkhu's name is recorded) as well as some from Delhi, such as Jeevan Ram and Hasan-al-Din, came to settle in the plains of Punjab, both in Lahore and Amritsar. Along with the painters came the Pahari folk-songs and Pahari dishes as well.

The courtyard of the Golden Temple was extended and remodelled in our own time.

Amenities for hundreds of devotees who visited the town every day were provided with a view to attract more settlers. Ranjit Singh had displayed remarkable foresight in inviting the Marwari traders to settle in Amritsar, for he knew well that trade had an important part to play in the evolution of a society. (Among these eminent Marwaris of the time, Seth Radha Krishan, a social worker, and Padma Prakash Maheshwari deserve special mention.)

During the reign of Ranjit Singh, a leading figure among these Marwari traders was Raja Vir Bhan: a scholar-priest, who brought along a number of Marwari merchants. He built a Saivite shrine, known as Vir Bhan-ka-Shivala (Vir Bhan was a devotee of Siva), inside the Ghee-Mandi Gate and commissioned painters to decorate its walls.

Through Ranjit Singh's initiative, Amritsar became a flourishing business centre. A business street now known as Katra Ahluwalian was at first Nauriah Bazar, named after a well-known community of the Marwaris. There is a popular tale retold by the old folk which further substantiates the habitation of Marwaris in this area: It is said that the Marwaris entreated Ranjit Singh to lay the foundation stone of Katra Ahluwalian. It was a momentary slip on his part that he laid the first brick in a slanting position, whereupon a priest, who was present on the occasion, predicted: "It is inauspicious that this has happened thus; now, instead of prosperity and good fortune, the reverse would befall." Ranjit Singh, the noble and generous king that he was, allotted each shop for a paltry rupee and a quarter by way of compensation against the threat of any future loss.

Ranjit Singh also encouraged the nobles of his court to reside in Amritsar. This triple blend of trade, religion and aristocratic patronage was soon to find reflection in art and architecture. Numerous Hindu temples, palatial *havelis* and *burjs* (residences of the rich), *akharas* of the Mahants (priests), *dharamshalas* for the convenience of pious pilgrims, sprang up.

Amritsar, beginning from its pool of nectar, has remained the humming centre of millions of devotees, the caravanserai of travellers, the greatest trade centre of northern India, and an inspiration in the struggle for freedom for four centuries. And it will remain, what it has been since its foundation, the source of the passion for unity of faiths, which the Sikh Gurus preached for generations, as well as of the love that the poet-saint Nanak brought to a troubled world.

– K. C. ARYAN

Sri Hari Mandir Sahib

Evolution of the shrine

The Hari Mandir, now called the Golden Temple, is a living symbol of the spiritual and historical traditions of the Sikhs. The tank and the temple have been a source of inspiration to the Sikh community ever since its foundation. It is evident from the Sikh chronicles that the Gurus exhorted their followers to accept all Sikh centres as places of pilgrimage. As Sri Hari Mandir Sahib was the first important holy shrine, it became, as the centre of inspiration and action and the most significant achievement of the Gurus, the chief place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.

The origin of the place where the Sri Hari Mandir stands is shrouded in mystery. Some trace its origin to the pre-historic, Vedic-epic period as a place of considerable religious importance in the form of a *Amrit Kund* (Spring of Nectar). But the site seems to have lost its eminence under the sway of the Buddhist movement, which swept away most of the important Hindu holy places. Before its association with the Sikh Gurus, the site of the Hari Mandir was a low-lying area, with a small pond (at the present site of the Dukh Bhanjani Beri — Healer of Sorrows), set in jungle terrain, surrounded by tiny hamlets. But the place was on the route of caravans passing to the North-West frontier and other old trade centres. However, the site of the temple lay desolate before it began to be visited by the Sikh Gurus.

Many popular myths and legends are connected with the origin of the *Amrit Sarowar* (Tank of Nectar). It is said that Guru Amar Das found on the banks of the pool the desired herb for the skin ailment of Guru Angad (the second Guru of the Sikhs). A persistent local tradition highlights the medicinal properties of the waters of the pond: Rajni, the daughter of Rai Dhuni Chand, a *kardar* (revenue collector) of Patti, brought her leper husband here and he was cured after having a dip in the pond. It is said that Ram Das (at that time, on a visit to a nearby area) came to the place to investigate the above episode and was so much impressed with the beauty of the surroundings that he decided to make it a pilgrim centre.

2

The actual idea of establishing various places of pilgrimage had been conceived by Guru Amar Das. The predominant factor which motivated the Guru was to initiate centres where the traditions of the faith could be preached. The second factor was the consideration for the peaceful settlement of his future successor, Ram Das. In order to avoid all possibilities of clashes between his own progeny and the appointed successor Ram Das, Guru Amar Das deemed it better that his children stay at Goindwal and Ram Das settle at some new place.[1]

3

The new pilgrim centre lay amidst the villages of Sultanwind, Tung, Gumtala and Gilwali — at that time in the *pargana* of Jhabbal. The acquisition of the site by the Sikh Gurus is told in different versions by different historians: That the land was granted by Emperor Akbar to Guru Amar Das as a token of thanksgiving for his conquest of the fort of Chittor, when he visited the Guru at Goindwal, enroute to Lahore;[2] that it was acquired by Guru Ram Das before the grant was actually obtained or purchased by the Guru on payment of Rs. 700 from the Zamindars of Tung at the instance of Emperor Akbar;[3] that it was presented by the people of Sultanwind to the Guru out of reverence.[4]

There are no contemporary or near contemporary records and documents confirming the testimony to any of the above statements.

Whatever the version about the acquisition of the land, it appears that, originally, the site on

which the temple stands was under the ownership of the zamindars of Tung village and later it was acquired by the Sikhs Gurus either on payment or free of cost.

It is certain, however, that the land of the Hari Mandir was revenue-free land. The papers of the land settlement of Amritsar of the British period dated A.D. 1865 record the land of Darbar Sahib Guru Ram Das as revenue-free grant.

4

The programme of the new project was chalked out by Guru Amar Das and told to Ram Das. The latter was instructed to acquire funds for expenditure from Baba Buddha Ji. Some experienced, devout, elderly Sikhs were instructed to join Ram Das in carrying out the new project.[5]

5

The plan was executed by Ram Das under the counsel of Baba Buddha Ji. The inauguration was in traditional Indian style, with distribution of sweets after prayers. The Guru made his abode by the site. Labourers were engaged. Many Sikh devotees came to work for the project. Before the regular excavation work of the tank began, a sort of village settlement had grown. First of all, a boundary line of the settlement was laid on 5 Har Vadi 13, Samvat 1627 BK, A.D. 1570[6] and it was named Chak/Chak Guru/Guru Ka Chak/Chak Guru Ram Das/Ram Das Pura. These were the previous names of Amritsar. Kilns were laid and a number of hutments were built. Members of over 50 caste-groups from Patti, Kasur and Kalanûr were called to settle here, to assure a regular supply of essential commodities. A market called Guru-ka-bazar was established. Wells were dug and a good many rich *sarafs* (bankers) and *banjaras* (traders) came to the growing town.[7]

The construction work of the tank and the town proceeded smoothly. But, while the work was in progress, Ram Das had to rush back to Goindwal at the call of the dying Guru Amar Das.

The work was resumed on his return, after his pontification in A.D. 1577, and the construction of both the tank and the town was completed the same year.[8]

Then the Guru called the *khatris* (business community) and told them to take charge of the holy place. But they pleaded their inability to perform religious duties and requested the Guru to engage some brahmins and fakirs (mendicants) to perform the ceremonies. But the *khatris* sought the blessings of the Guru for *kirt* and *barkat* to pursue their professions.[9]

The Guru and his disciples were overjoyed on the completion of the new pilgrimage centre. Guru Ram Das composed beautiful verses in the glory of the *sarowar*, making an injunction upon his followers to take bath in this holy tank and meditate here on Hari Nam (the name of God).[10]

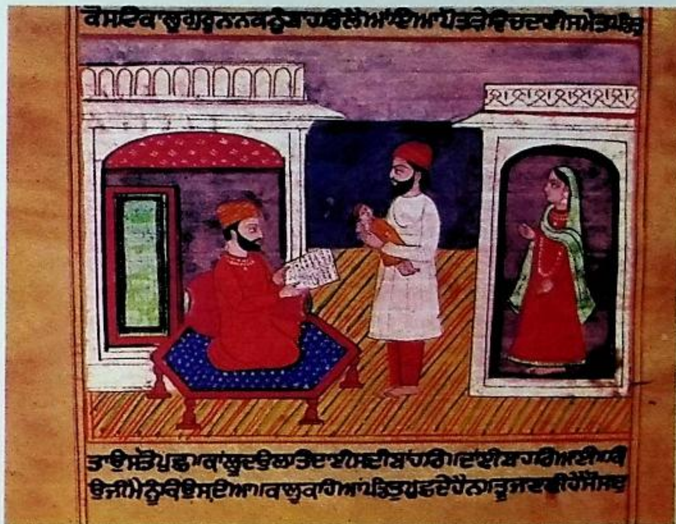
Soon after its foundation, Amritsar became the centre of Guru Ram Das's missionary activities and the headquarters of the Sikh faith.

6

Amrit Sarowar remained enclosed in *kachcha* construction till Guru Arjan Dev ascended the *gaddi* in A.D. 1581. Then the tank was made *pucca* and the side stairs were bricked, but the

The Janam Sakhi *books are popular tales*
of the life of Guru Nanak,
the founder of the Sikh faith.
As is natural in such stories,
certain miracles are attributed
to the great teacher.
The Guru himself only claimed
to be a devotee of the One God.
His message was,
"I am not Hindu :
I am not Musalman :
I am man".
The Hari Mandir has no idols.
Only the Guru Granth *including*
the sayings of Guru Nanak
and other saints, are enshrined.
They are recited morning and evening,
to the accompaniment of music.

6. *Mehta Kalu and his wife Tripta go to astrologer to have the horoscope of baby Nanak cast after his birth.*
7. *The boy Nanak is taken by his father to the school. Nanak has offerings for the teacher in his hand.*



6

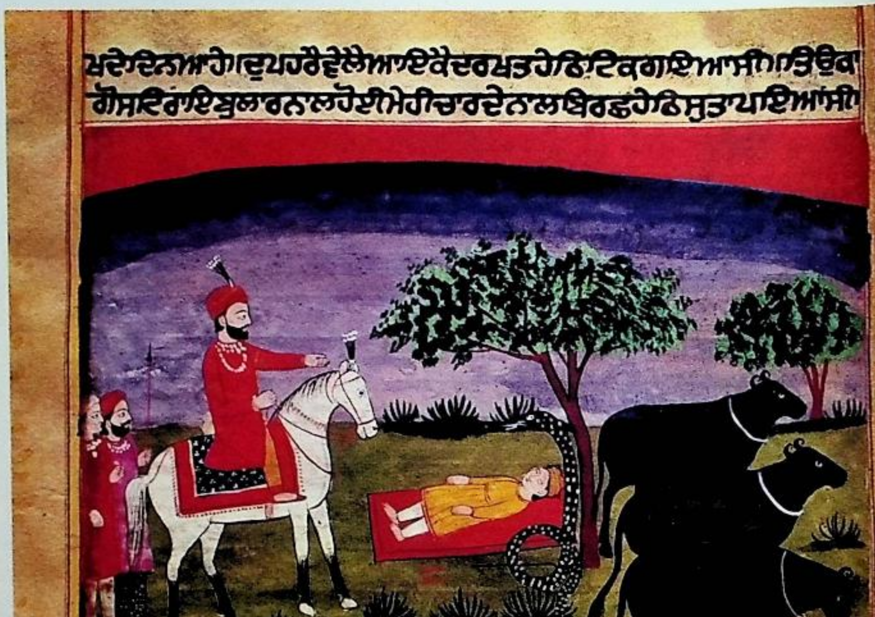


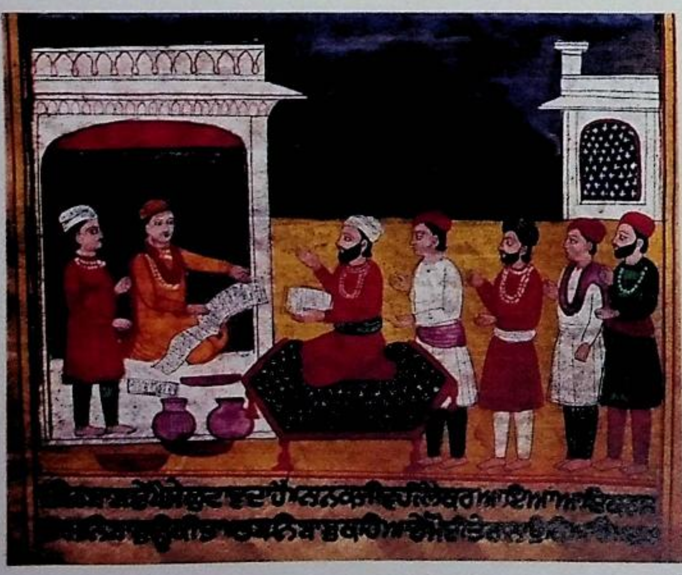
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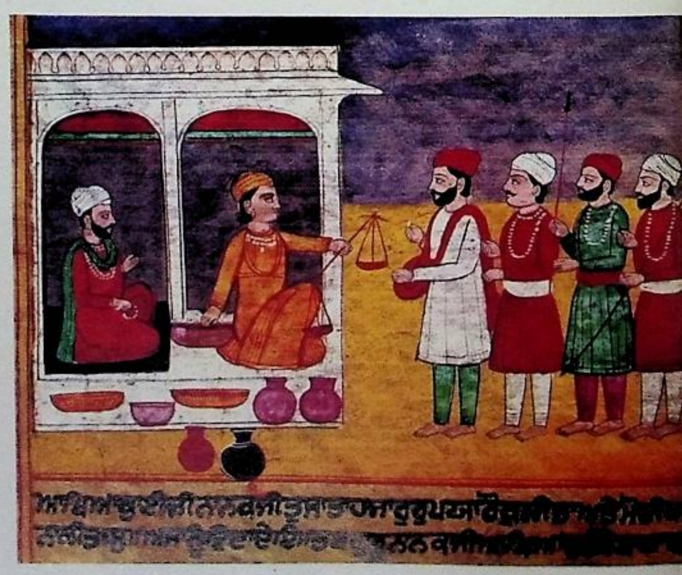
8. *Legend has it that Nanak fell asleep while grazing his father's buffaloes. A Muslim landlord, named Bular, saw a miracle. The sun had moved away from the tree and there was no shade. But a Cobra, with its hood spread out, was seen to be providing shade to Nanak.*

9. *Nanak was given the job of accountant in the treasury of the Nawab of Sultanpur. The future saint is seen tendering honest acco to his patron.*
(This reproduction has been sponsored by Punjab & Sind Bank Ltd., Amritsar.)

10. *Nanak was appointed a storekeeper for Nawab of Sultanpur. He is seen distribu rations to the Nawab's employees.*



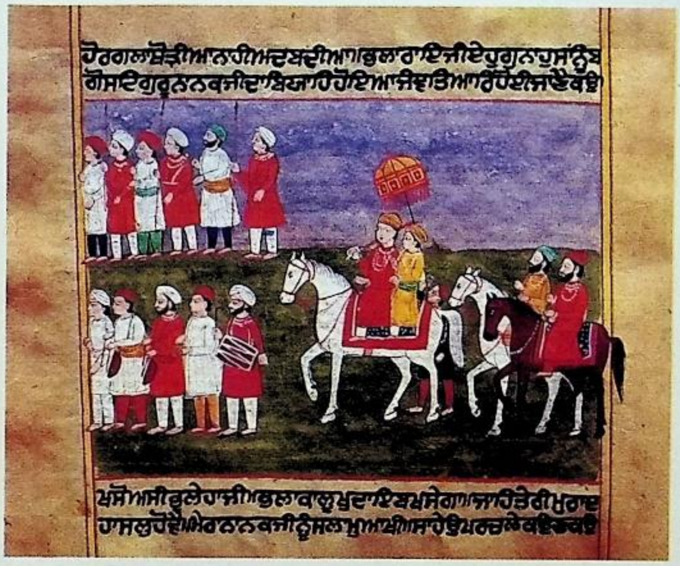


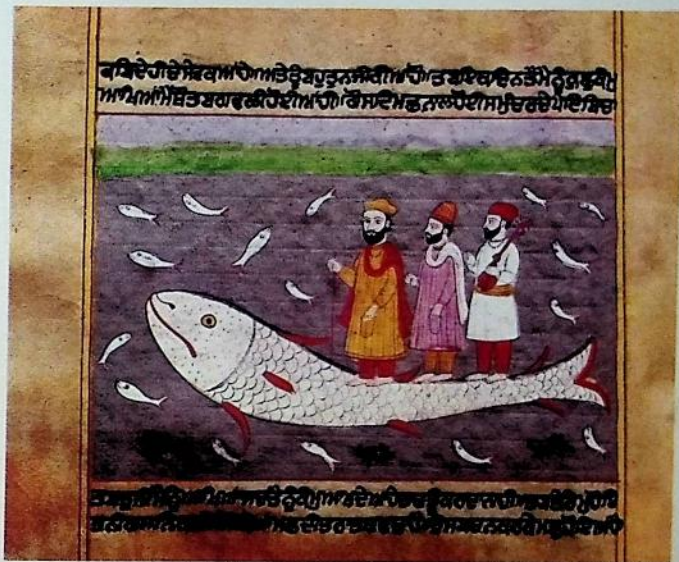


11. Married at the age of thirteen to Sulakhni, daughter of Mulchand of Batala, Nanak is seen as a bridegroom with the bestman seated on the horse, going in procession to the house of his in-laws.

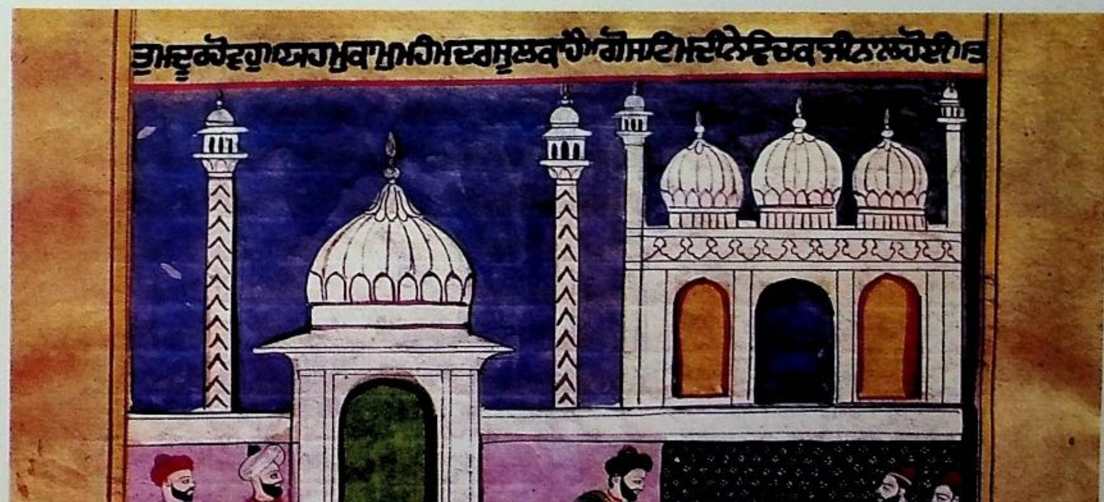
12. Guru Nanak is shown with his two disciples, the Muslim rebeck player Mardana and the Hindu Bala, travelling on the back of a whale across the seas.

13. Guru Nanak is said to have fallen asleep with his feet pointing towards the holy kaaba. The Mullah of the Mosque awakened him and said: 'Your feet are pointing towards the house of God.' Guru Nanak answered: 'Then turn my feet in the direction where the house of God is not'.





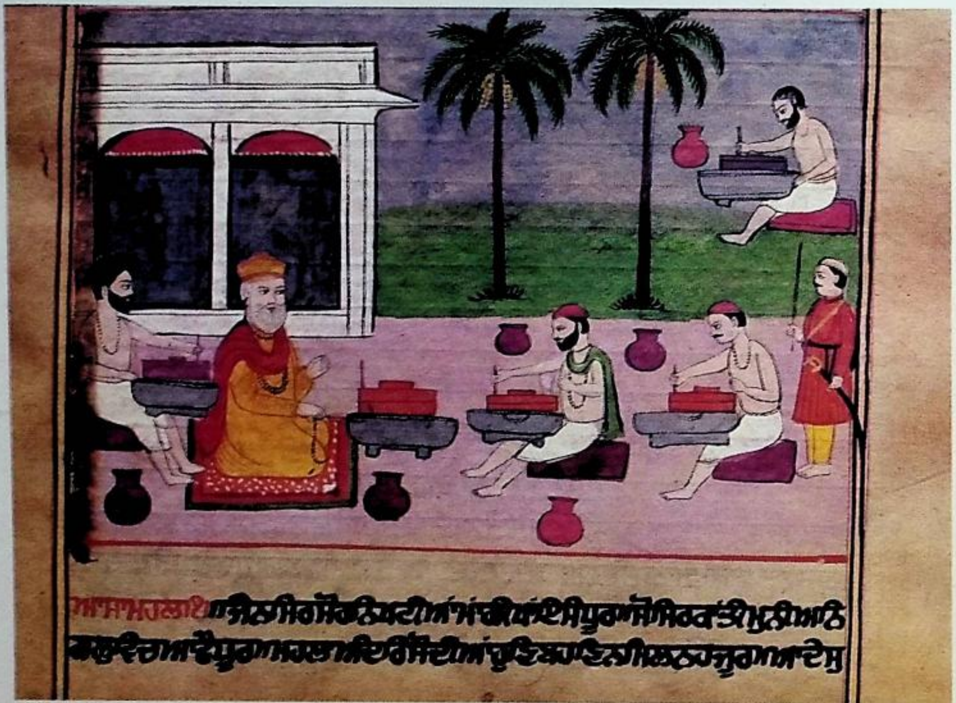
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14. *Guru Nanak was put in prison by the Mughals and sentenced to hard labour. The* Janam Sakhi *myth goes: that the stone mill began to move on its own. Babur heard of the miracle and is said to have come to the prison to pay homage to the Guru.*

15. *Guru Nanak lived in a time of chaos and saw frequent battles between the contending armies.*



14



The ten Janam Sakhi paintings are reproduced here through the courtesy of Dr. Pritam Singh, Sardar Khushwant Singh and the Times of India, Bombay.

15

bottom of the tank was still to be attended. The Sikhs showed great enthusiasm and devotion for *seva* (voluntary service) to complete the job.[11] Construction work on the tank was completed in a short time. The successful completion of the project was attributed to the grace of God. Guru Arjan Dev expressed his thanksgiving in the words:

> God Himself hath come to fulfill the
> Task of the Saints
> Yea, He Himself hath come to do the Work.
> And, now, Blessed is the earth, the Tank and
> the Nectar with which it is filled. . .

The tank was named Amritsar. The town also came to be called by the same name.

7

While the tank was under construction, Guru Arjan Dev consulted Baba Buddha Ji and expressed his wish to raise a beautiful permanent structure in the pool of nectar.

The plan of the present Hari Mandir was then projected by Guru Arjan Dev. It was decided by the Guru to build the temple in the centre of the tank.[12] The object of Guru Arjan Dev in planning the structure of the Hari Mandir in the middle of Amrit Sarowar was to combine both spiritual and temporal aspects, to represent a new synthesis of Indian thought, the combination of *Nirgun* and *Sargun*. The leaders of the Sikh community and the devotees of the Guru welcomed the new plan.

8

The plan was executed under the direct control and supervision of Guru Arjan Dev assisted by Baba Buddha Ji, Bhai Gurudas and other devoted Sikhs. The Guru appointed his trustworthy followers, such as Bhai Salo, Bhai Bhagtu, Bhai Paira, Bhai Bahlo and Bhai Kalyana, to supervise the construction and arrange for building materials. The assignment of brick-making was entrusted to Bhai Bahlo, an expert.[13]

9

According to early Sikh tradition, the foundation stone of the Hari Mandir was laid by Guru Arjan Dev himself. (A related story tells us that a mason accidentally displaced a brick, on which the Guru expressed the fear that the foundation would have to be laid again in the future. This incident is mentioned in the Sikh sources written after the reconstruction of the Hari Mandir, in A.D. 1764, and is carried up to the late nineteenth century.) The recorded account is that Guru Arjan Dev laid the foundation of Hari Mandir on Ist Magh Samvat 1645 (A.D. 1588). However, the later Sikh tradition holds that the foundation was laid at the request of Guru Arjan Dev by a Muslim divine, Pir Mian Mir of Lahore, in Samvat 1645 BK (A.D. 1588).[14] This version is based on oral tradition and is not supported either by the early Sikh sources or any of the Persian accounts, including the biographies of Mian Mir.

The construction work of the new temple was undertaken with great enthusiasm. A large number of Sikhs participated in the work. Some of the Sikh devotees became legends and adorn the pages of the annals of Sikh literature. The solid foundation was laid on a level higher than the bottom of the tank with lime and bricks. Broad walls were built. A bridge connecting the temple with Darshani Deorhi (entrance gate) was constructed over the support of *Surang Dwaries* (aqueducts) *mehrabs* and *dats* (arches).

Instead of building the Hari Mandir on a higher level, as was the custom in traditional Hindu temple architecture, the Guru built the shrine on a level lower than the surrounding ground. The visitors have to go down the steps in order to pay homage to the holy shrine. The other distinguishing feature of the structure of the Hari Mandir is that, unlike the Hindu temples which usually have only one gate, the Hari Mandir was made open on all the four sides; representing open entry to all, a privilege which was denied in the Hindu temples. The construction of the temple was accomplished in a continuous process. Even while the work was proceeding apace, news about the ambitious project spread far and wide and pilgrims began to visit Amritsar in large numbers. All the devotees contributed a share from their earnings to the construction fund. Rich people offered huge donations. The *masands* (Guru's agents) collected funds for the project, from far and near.[15]

The tank and the temple rose in all the majesty of faith and beauty. Guru Arjan Dev sang a hymn to the glory of the holy place:

> The Guru hath perfected my Ablution,
> And, contemplating the Lord, my sins have been
> washed off.

The Golden Temple radiates the selflessness of the voluntary services offered by the Sikhs. The honest and hard work of the disciples were duly acknowledged by the Guru. All the Sikhs who offered *seva* as worship were rewarded.[16]

Simultaneously with the construction of the temple, plans for the expansion of the town were taken up. The Sikhs were encouraged to settle in Amritsar. Consequently, the city became well populated.[17]

Some of the inhabitants and traders of Lahore did not appreciate the town plan of Amritsar. They scoffed at the idea of a city around a big tank in a low lying area and feared a great risk to the investment during the rainy season when the raised level of the water would penetrate into the localities and damage the habitations. The businessmen of Amritsar were alarmed. They approached the Guru and expressed their fears. The Guru assured them all protection and foretold the future prospects of the city.[18] Guru Arjan Dev composed the following hymn setting out the attributes of the holy town:

> Eternal is this city of my Guru, my God.
> Contemplating (herein) the Name, I have
> attained Bliss.

With the construction of the Hari Mandir, Amritsar attained the status of *Ath Sath Tirth*. The fame of the newly constructed holy place spread far and wide. Local Sikhs visited the temple daily, while the Sikhs of nearby areas paid frequent visits. Those from afar came to Amritsar at least twice a year, on the occasion of Diwali and Baisakhi.[19]

The next remarkable development of the Hari Mandir was the compilation of the sacred writings of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan Dev collected the genuine *bani* of the first four Sikh Gurus, to which he added his own compositions, as well as selections from the writings of the Hindu *bhaktas*, and Muslim saints. The selection for the holy scripture was based on the principle of the unity of God and the brotherhood of Man. While Guru Arjan Dev was busy preparing the holy volume, it was reported to Emperor Akbar by the enemies of the Guru that the book of the Sikhs under preparation contained some passages derogatory to Islam and Hinduism. The

Emperor called on the Guru at Goindwal, enroute to north towards the end of A.D. 1598, and asked to see the sacred volume. Some hymns were read out to the Emperor and he was so pleased with the contents that Akbar readily acceded to the request of the Guru to remit the annual revenue of the district zamindars, hard pressed by the failure of the monsoon.[20]

The successful intervention of the Guru earned him immense popularity with the Jats and zamindars of the area.[21]

The holy scripture was compiled under the title of *Adi Granth*. As there was no binder at that time at Amritsar, the holy scripture was sent to Lahore through Bhai Bano.[22] The *Adi Granth* was completed and was formally installed in the Hari Mandir on Bhadon Sudi Ikam Samvat 1661 BK (August, 1604).

Baba Buddha Ji was appointed the first *granthi* (head priest) of the temple. From that very day regular worship, *kirtan* and other religious services started at the shrine.

Soon the Hari Mandir became the principal place of worship for the Sikhs. What the Hari Mandir and Amritsar were to mean to the Sikhs is best expressed in the words of Guru Arjan Dev: I have seen all places; there is not another like thee . . .

The Hari Mandir was destroyed by the Afghan invaders thrice (A.D. 1757, 1762 and 1764), and was finally rebuilt in its present shape and structure during the period of the Sikh *misls* (confederacies) in A.D. 1764. After the conquest of Sirhind on January 14, 1764, the Khalsa (Sikh Commonwealth) spread a sheet and collected offerings amounting to rupees nine lakhs.[23]

The amount was deposited with leading bankers of Amritsar, like Mohan Mal, Bhag Mal Lamb, Shayam Bhabra and Kalyana Pasi. Bhai Des Raj, a *khatri* of the village Sur Singh, Amritsar district, known for his integrity, was placed in charge of all finance for the project, so that the building of the temple and the tank could be completed on schedule. Bhai Des Raj was granted the seal of "Guru Di Mohar" by the Khalsa to collect funds. The Sikhs regarded this *mohar* as a *hukumnama* (despatch) from their Gurus.

Construction work started under the supervision of Des Raj.[24] This time the foundation of the temple was laid by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on 11 Baisakh, Samvat 1821 BK (A.D. 1764).[25] With the sustained efforts of the Khalsa, the construction of the Amrit Sarowar, the Hari Mandir, the bridge and the Darshani Deorhi was completed by Samvat 1833 BK (A.D. 1776). The construction of *parkarma* (circumambulatory) and religious places around the tank was completed by Samvat 1841 BK (A.D. 1784).

The Golden Temple is not only a place of worship but also a rallying centre of Sikh solidarity. It is the heritage of the Sikh people gathered in their five-hundred-year-old history. Legends and miracles are connected with the holy tank, while great martyrdoms and triumphs are associated with various spots in the temple precincts.

The story of the Golden Temple enshrines the romance of Man's quest for faith and ennobles the suffering and sacrifice of many. The undying impact of the quest is imprinted on the history, thought, literature and folklore of the Sikh peoples.

The words of Guru Arjan Dev still hearkens: *"Dithe sab thav nahi tudh jehia"*.

(For Footnotes, please see page71)

— **MADANJIT KAUR**



16. The Hindu Kalasa, based on mount Kailasa, atop this shrine is a fanciful elaboration of the Islamic dome above the Hindu cubist architecture, inspired by the synthetic Sikh faith.

Art and Architecture of the Golden Temple

The study of the art and architecture of the Golden Temple has, unfortunately, remained a subject of unconcern for art historians and critics. Even scholars of Indian temple architecture have bypassed it and references, whenever made, were mere courtesies. Fergusson considered the Golden Temple an example of the forms which Hindu temple architecture assumed in the nineteenth century. According to the official list of buildings of interest, published by the Punjab Government in 1875, the design of the temple, as reconstructed by Ranjit Singh, was borrowed from the shrine of Saint Mian Mir, near Lahore. Louis Rousselet, writing in 1882, regarded it as a "handsome style of architecture". Major Cole described it as an adaptation of Mohammadan styles, flavoured with a good deal of Hindu tradition. Percy Brown considered it to be a product of the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim influences, combined with elaborations that imparted it an appearance of its own. In the opinion of Hermann Goetz, Kangra transformation of Oudh architecture was taken over by the Sikhs and evolved into that wonderful, though occasionally gaudy, Indian 'rococo' art often seen in the gurudwaras of Punjab.

The architectural prototype of the Golden Temple came into being as an idea combining the *dharamshala* and the tank envisaged by Guru Arjan, the son and successor of Guru Ram Das. Instead of building the temple on a high plinth in the Hindu style, Guru Arjan had it built in a depression so that worshippers had to go down the steps in order to enter it. Also it had four entrances, symbolic of the new faith which made no distinction between the four Hindu castes. Although there is no written record or contemporary sketch giving the concept of the prototype, it appears to have been, more or less, similar to the present structure dating from 1764, with the greater part of its decoration added in the early years of the nineteenth century. The year 1764 has been ascribed by H. H. Cole in his monograph on the temple published in 1884. However, in *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar*, published in 1889, Giani Gian Singh states that the tank, the Hari Mandir, the causeway and Darshani Deorhi were completed in 1776.

The main structure rises from the centre of the sacred pool, 150 metres square, approached by a causeway about 60 metres long. An archway on the western side of the pool opens on to the causeway, bordered with balustrades of fretted marble, and, at close intervals, there are standard lamps, their great lanterns set upon marble columns. The 52-metre square-based Hari Mandir, to which the causeway leads, stands on a 20-metre square platform. Its lower parts are of white marble, but the upper parts are covered with plates of gilded copper.

In the interior, on the ground floor, is the Guru Granth Sahib, placed under a gorgeous canopy, studded with jewels. On the second storey is a pavilion known as Shish Mahal or Mirror Room, so designed as to have a square opening in the centre to view from there the ground floor, with the further provision of a narrow circumambulatory around the square opening.

The interior of the Shish Mahal is ornamented with small pieces of mirror, of various sizes and shapes, skilfully inlaid in the ceiling, and walls richly embellished with designs, mostly floral in character.

Further above the Shish Mahal is again a small square pavilion, considerably small both at its base as well as in its elevation, surmounted by a low fluted golden dome, lined at its base with a number of smaller domes. The walls of the two lower storeys, forming parapets, terminate with several rounded pinnacles. There are four *chhatris* or kiosks at the corners. The combination of several dozens of large, medium and miniature domes of gilded copper create a unique and dazzling effect, enhanced by the reflection in the water below.

The typical art and architectural features of the Golden Temple can be summed up as (1) multiplicity of *chhatris* which ornament the parapets, angles at every prominence or

projection; (2) the invariable use of fluted domes covered with gilded copper; (3) balconised windows thrown out on carved brackets or bay-windows with shallow elliptical cornices; and (4) enrichment of walls, arches and ceilings by various forms of mural art.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh repaired the principal building in 1802 A.D. This act is commemorated by an inscription over the entrance to the central shrine, which reads: The Great Guru in His wisdom looked upon Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his chief servitor and Sikh, and, in His benevolence, bestowed on him the privilege of serving the temple.

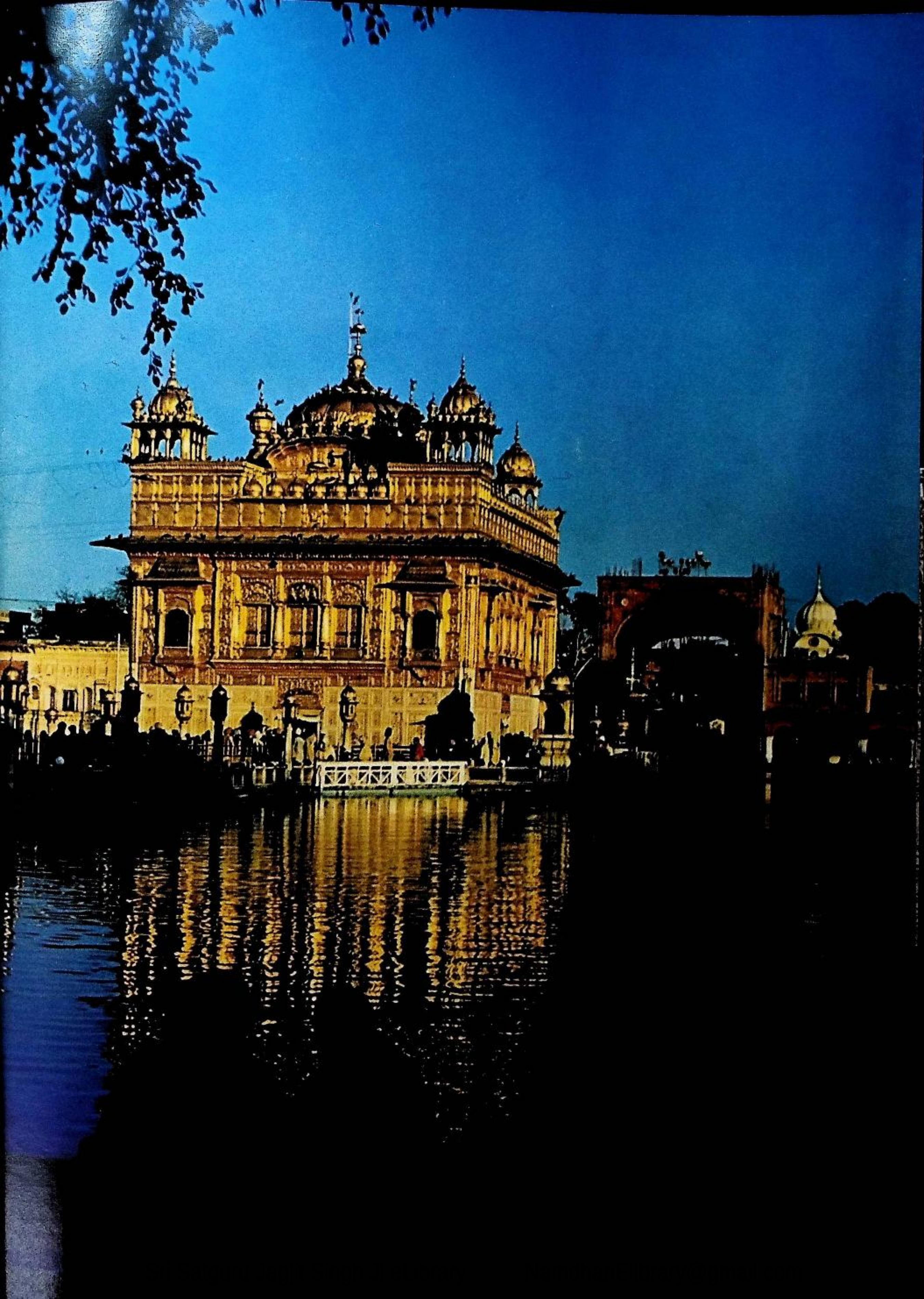
To roof the temple with sheets of gilded copper, he donated Rs. 500,000 and the work was executed by Mistri Yar Mohammad Khan, under the supervision of Bhai Sand Singh. The first plate on the temple was fixed in 1803 A.D. The personages who donated for the embellishment of the ceiling on the ground floor included Tara Singh Gheba, Pratap Singh, Jodh Singh and Ganda Singh Peshawari, the last of whom made his contribution in 1823 A.D. The archway under the Darshani Deorhi was embellished with sheets of gilded copper by Sangat Singh, the Raja of Jind. Being the central shrine of the Sikhs, almost every sardar of any pretension contributed to its architectural and decorative additions from time to time. That is why it is not feasible, except for a few date-inscribed works, to make a chronological account of the decorations, murals or other work, in the Golden Temple.

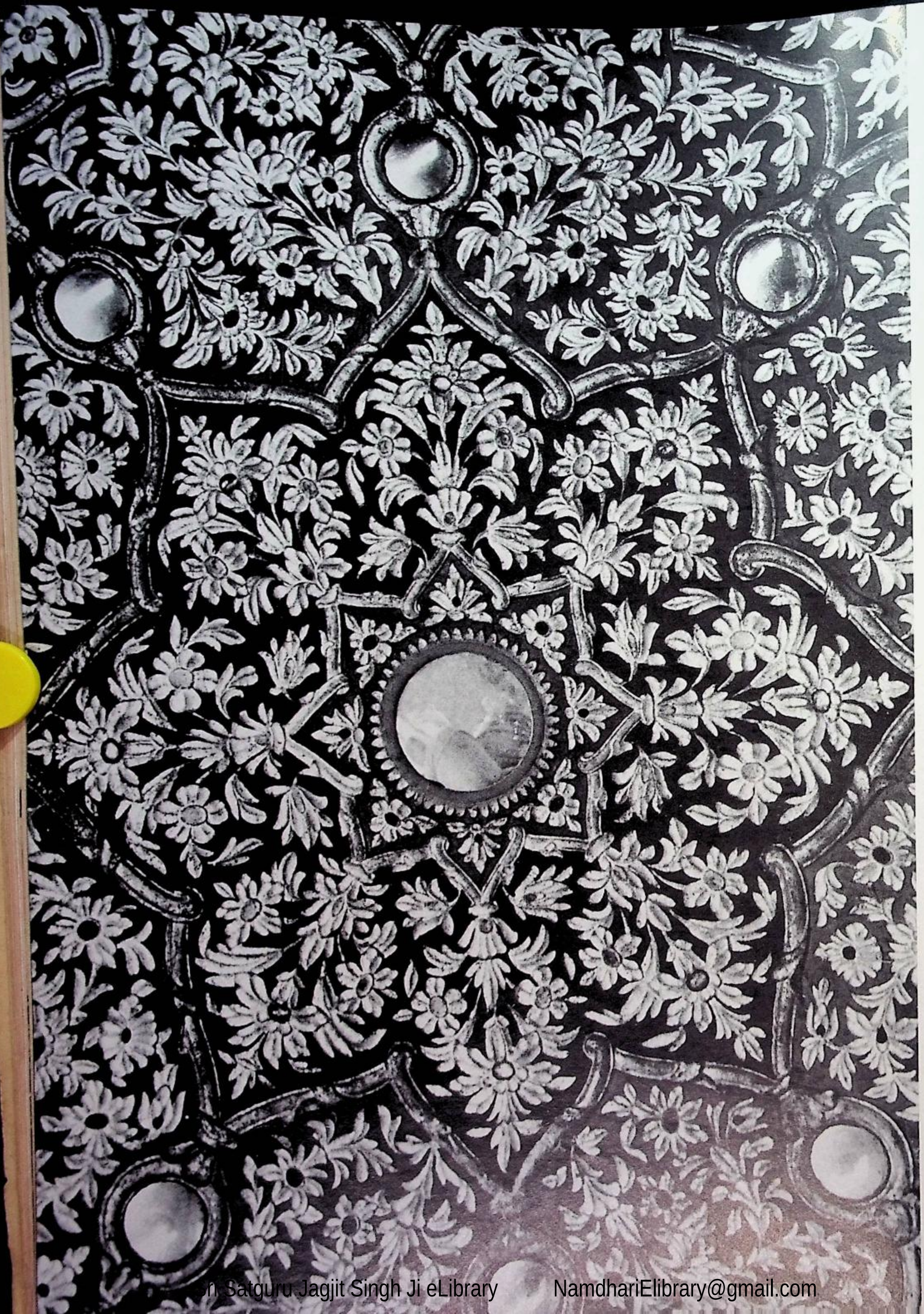
The decorations which fall strictly in the category of mural painting are floral patterns interspersed with animal motifs. There are about 300 different patterns on the walls, which, from a distance, look like hung Persian carpets. The *naqqashes*, or painters, of these patterns had developed a terminology of their own to distinguish various designs. Among these the most prominent is known by the name of *Dehin*: a medium of expression of the imaginative study of the artist's own creation of idealised forms. *Gharwanjh* is the base of *Dehin*. This is also a decorative device involving knotted grapples between animals. In the Golden Temple are seen *Gharwanj* showing cobras, lions and elephants clutching one another, carrying flower vases in which fruits and fairies have been depicted. *Patta* is a decorative border design used around the *Dehin* and often depicted through creepers. There are also compositions based on aquatic creatures.

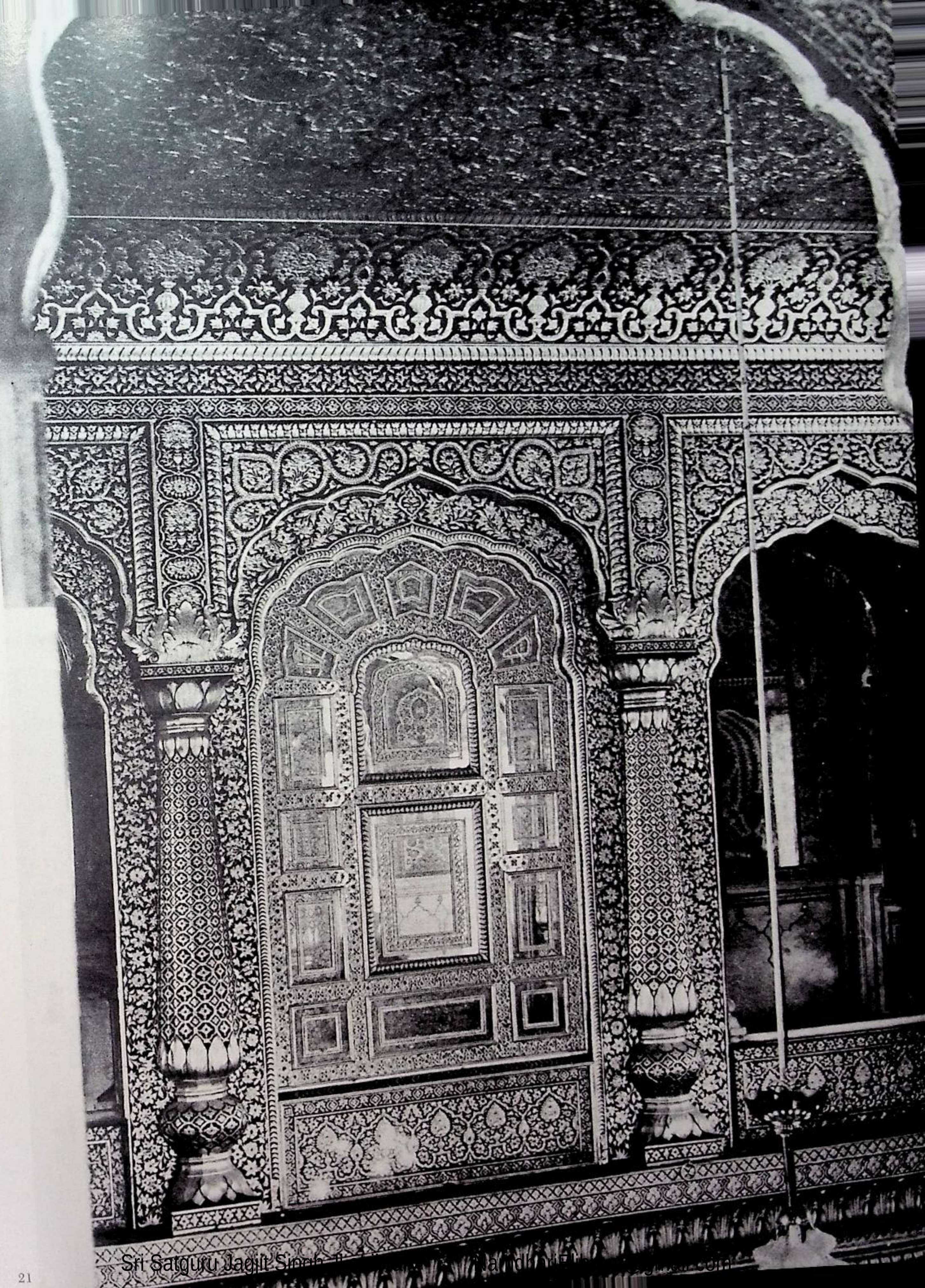
The only mural depicting human figures is to be seen on the wall behind the northern narrow stairway leading to the top of the shrine, representing Guru Gobind Singh on horseback. According to the late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash, it was painted by a Kangra artist specially commissioned by Ranjit Singh for this purpose. It is said to be a true copy of a miniature painting that originally was in the collection of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra, which Ranjit Singh had intended to get copied in the form of a mural in the Golden Temple. Since the artist of the miniature in question had already died, the mural was executed by the painter's grandson. The name of the painter, however, is not known.

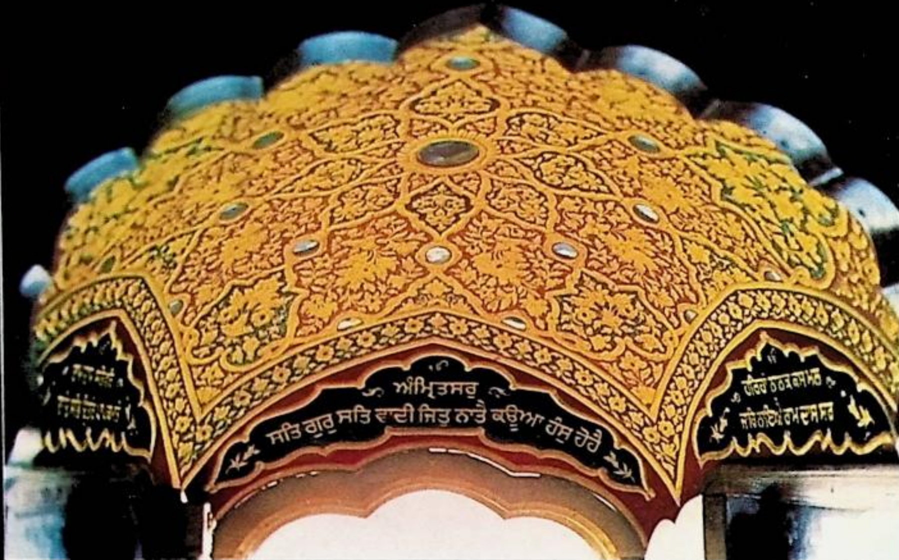
Paintings depicting mythological scenes referred to by H. H. Cole have entirely disappeared. Writing in 1878, W. Wakefield referred to erotic frescoes that covered the walls of the Golden Temple. However, in the absence of any other corroborative observation, his statement is of dubious value.

In addition to the work that falls strictly under the category of mural painting, a great volume of similar work in allied arts, loosely coming in the range of mural arts, has been done in the Golden Temple from time to time. This includes the work in embossed copper, *gach*, *tukri*, *jaratkari* and ivory inlay.









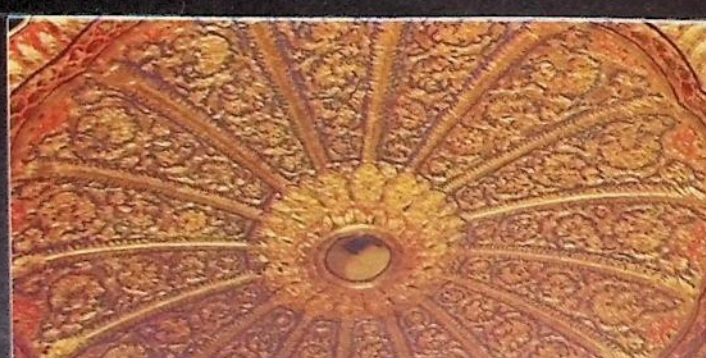
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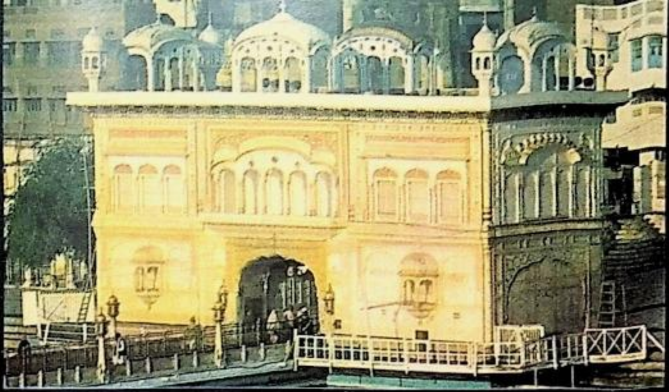
22. *The Bengali roof has been here adapted to a new scale, by adding more points than the four to the original cottage roof derived from Gaur (old Bengal). Amritsar borrowed the roof from Rajasthan, where it had arrived through Raja Man Singh, during the time of Akbar the Great.*

23. *The co-ordination of floral colour-work and* **guldastas** *originally derived from Mughal* **naqqashes** *achieves a freshness of design with unexpected spacing of familiar forms.*

24. *The symmetry of the dome realises the effect of a canopy, in the beauty of an unfolding flower. The artisans use masses of foliage to create the impact of the power of gold to uplift.*


23

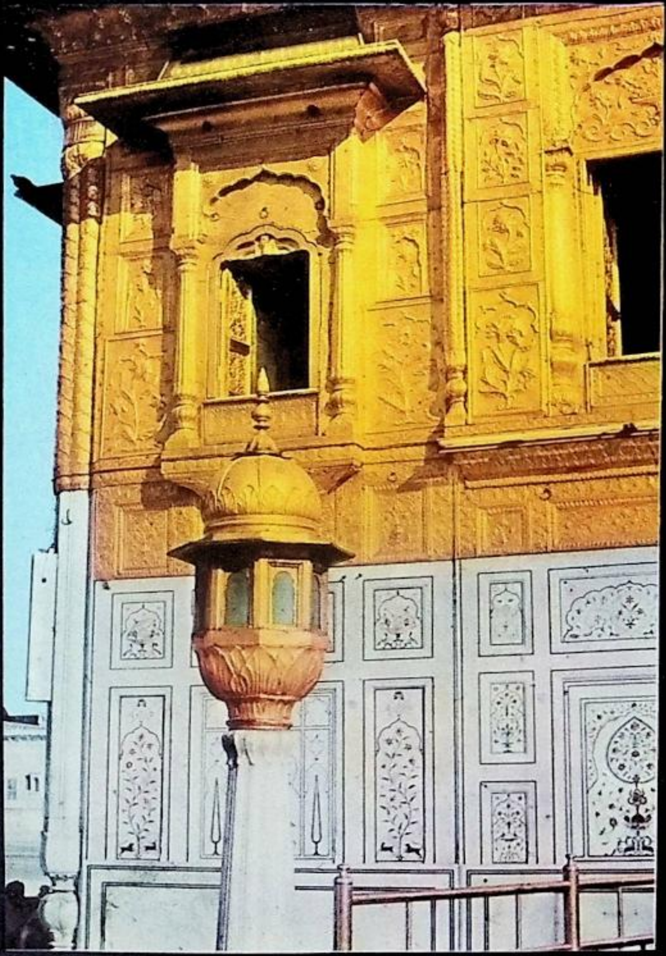

24



25. View of Darshani Deorhi from the causeway. The air houses on top are modelled on the Bengali-Mughal **chhatri** *style.*

26. The gold embossed panellings above the marble frontage of the Hari Mandir. The design of the foliage in both the inlay and the embossings owes much to Mughal inspiration.

27. Part of the vast courtyard below the Akal Takht with the marble mosaics tastefully laid in rectangles and variegated so as to please the eye.



26



27

28, 29. Vivid lines of floral, bird and animal forms were absorbed by the artisans from Mughal decorative art to show the natural relations of elements. The pilgrim's eye is supposed to discover suggestions of the One in every form.

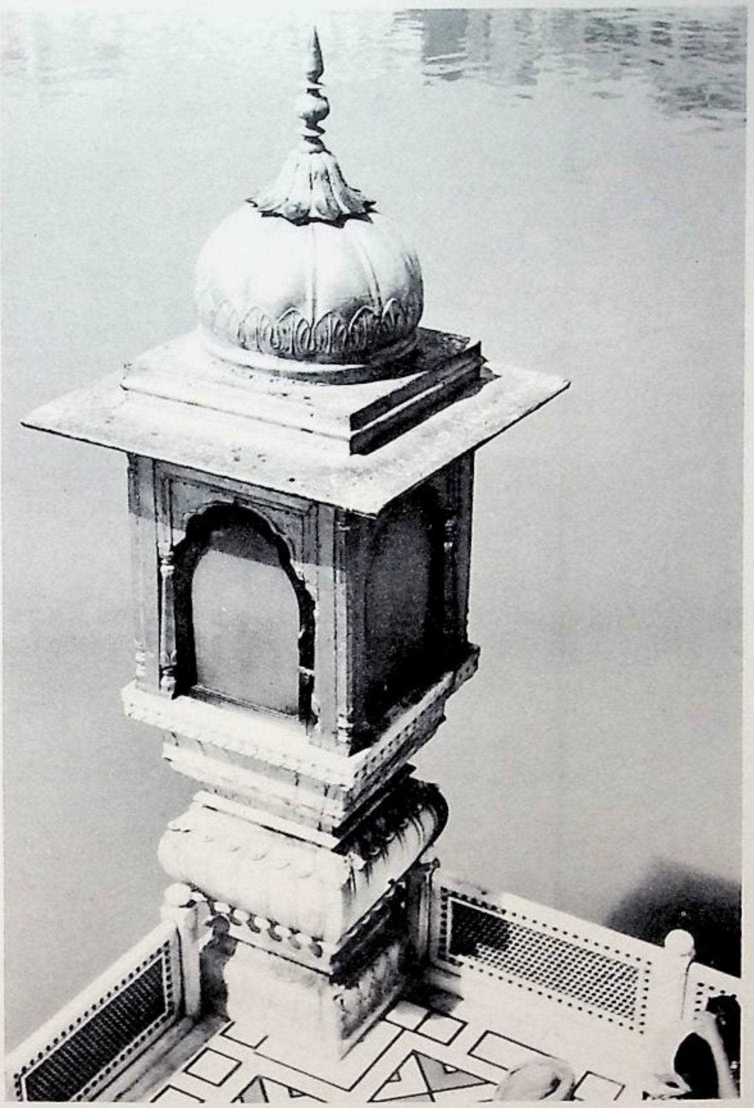


28



29

30



30-32. The adroit manipulation of Kalasas, by repetition, was to impress the worshipper's mind as through repeated notes of music. The placing of Rajasthani burjis *for pigeon-houses was deliberate—to attract the cooing birds of peace. The lamps, which light the way, were an afterthought, compelled by the flat length of the causeway, to punctuate the path with small jets of light and lead the mind on to the centre of ultimate illumination. The main dome is adumbrated like the double ceiling of the Islamic* maqbara.



32



31



Most of the exterior upper portions of the walls of the Golden Temple are covered with beaten copper plates, heavily gilded. The raised decorations are mainly floral and abstract, but there are some panels representing the human figure. On the front side, for instance, are two embossed copper panels, the lower representing Guru Nanak flanked by Bala and Mardana, and the upper representing Guru Gobind Singh on horseback.

Gach, a sort of stone or gypsum, was treated to form a paste and was applied on the wall like lime. Then it was fashioned out in designs with steel cutters and other implements. *Gach* work inlaid with coloured glass was known as *tukri* work and is to be seen in the second storey of the Shish Mahal. *Jaratkari* work involved the inlaying of coloured cut-stones in marble and is to be found on the lower portion of the exterior walls of the temple. In fact, the work is *pietre dure* and the inlay consists of semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli and onyx. The designs are Mughal in spirit, but the introduction of human figures, never shown in true Mughal decorations, reveals their Sikh origin.

The ivory inlay work is to be seen only on the doors of the Darshani Deorhi. The gate is made of *shisham* wood, the front overlaid with silver, the back inlaid with ivory. The silver-plated front is ornamented only with panels. At the back are square and rectangular panels with geometrical and floral designs, in which are introduced birds, lions, tigers and deer. Some of the ivory inlay is coloured green and red, the effect being, in the words of H. H. Cole, "extremely harmonious."

Most of the painters and craftsmen, who worked in various branches of mural arts and its appurtenances in the Golden Temple, remained unknown. Therefore, barring a very few works, it is almost impossible, in the present state of our knowledge, to attribute them to particular painters and craftsmen. The late Bhai Hari Singh, himself an artist, prepared a list consisting of twenty names of painters and craftsmen who worked in the Golden Temple. This list serially included the names of Baba Kishan Singh, Baba Bishan Singh, Kapur Singh, Bhai Kehar Singh, Mahant Ishar Singh, Bhai Sardul Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh, Bhai Metab Singh, Mistri Jaimal Singh, Bhai Harnam Singh, Bhai Ishar Singh, Bhai Gian Singh, Lal Singh Tarn Taran, Bhai Mangal Singh, Mistri Narain Singh, Mistri Jit Singh, Bhai Atma Singh, Baba Darja Mal and Bhai Vir Singh.

A good deal of the old work, particularly mural in character, has disappeared from the precincts of the Golden Temple. Initially, the disappearance of murals started at the close of the nineteenth century, when devotees were permitted to present contributions in the form of inlaid marble slabs, which were fixed on the walls painted with frescoes. The old Bungas of the Golden Temple, which have been demolished, were repositories of splendid paintings. Inside the main Darshani Deorhi, where marble slabs have been fixed, there were fine paintings by Mahant Ishar Singh.

Efforts have also been made to renovate the decaying paintings in the temple proper. But there appears not much reason to regret the loss, because, in the words of Michael Edwardes, the Golden Temple "is a symbol, glowing in richness and colour. That richness has, over the years, been constantly renewed, not always perhaps in the best of taste. But the Hari Mandir is not a museum. On the contrary, it is a shrine, part of the essential machinery of a living faith."

(For Books Consulted, please see page 72)

—KANWARJIT KANG

33. Har-ki-pauri: The original source of the whole complex preserves its simplicity, as it decends from the Hari Mandir shrine into the water. The double image captured in the picture releases the feeling of the contrast of real and unreal in ripples, which dissolve themselves into imperceptible feelings.



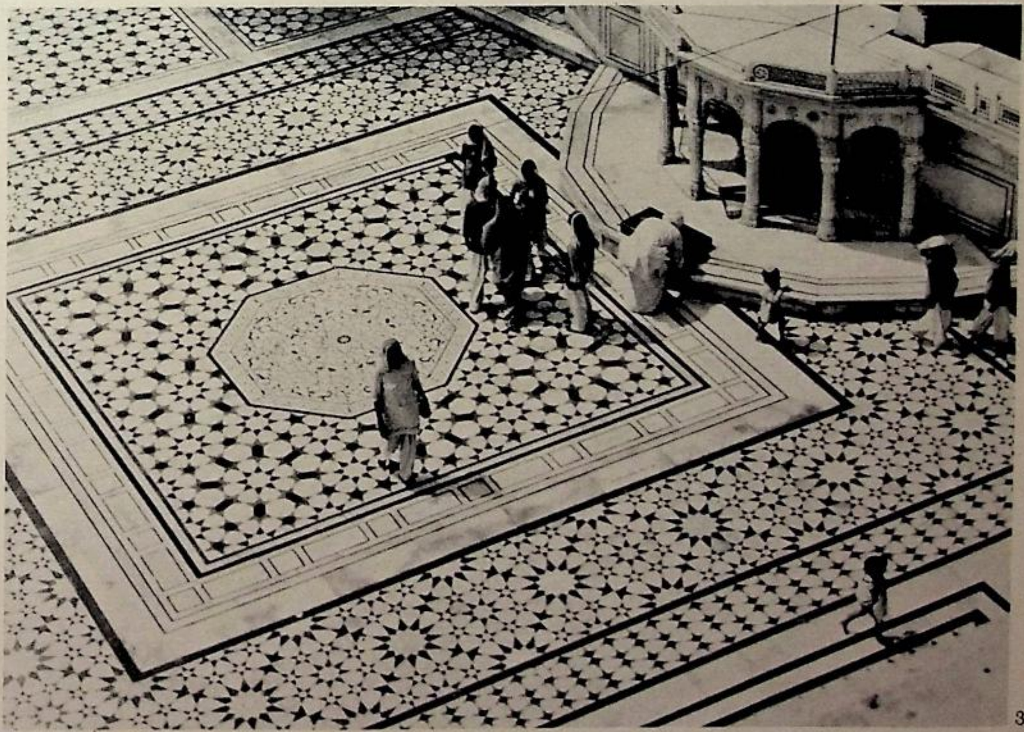
Akal Takht

There is no evidence to show exactly when the Akal Takht was built. From the amplitude of the near cantilever projection of the semi-circular platform onto a large square below, the throne of Akal seems to be a highly dramatised Durbar hall larger than that built by any Mughal Emperor in Delhi or Agra.

It is quite likely that, fighting from a temporal and spiritual kingdom placed in the heart-land of Punjab in Amritsar, the Guru, who put on two swords, that of the faith and of the emergent Sikh kingdom, had it built to give audiences to his followers.

At any rate, the convention seems to have been established to address all important gatherings, religious, social and political, from the Akal Takht to the amphitheatre below. This became the practice certainly during the important *Gurpurbs*, or the birthdays of the Gurus, when a vast congregation would assemble to hear recitations from the scriptures. The elaboration of the structure on marble pillars, as a semi-circular platform with an open view to the courtyard, reminiscent of an air-house, must have grown from the use to which the Durbar hall was put. The gilding of the ceiling with ornamentations like those in the interior of the Hari Mandir is perhaps later than in the holy of holies. The wall paintings apparently belong to a later period, as there are panels showing Europeans.

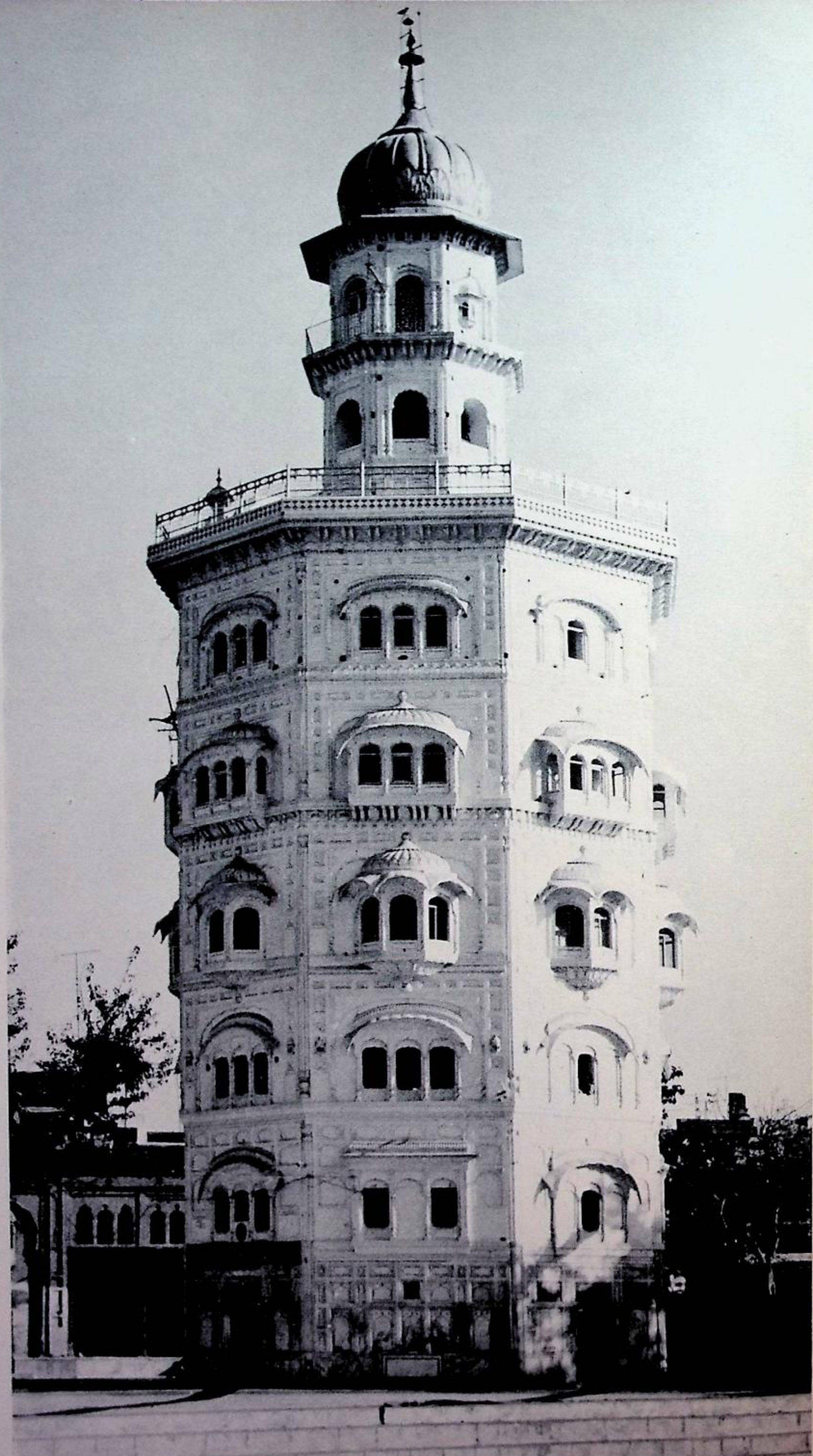
The total effect of the Akal Takht is of a unique and noble structure spread out somewhat like an outer court of the piazza Saint Marco in Venice.



35

34. The giant Akal Takht was designed as a platform bigger than the one in the Diwan-e-Am in the Red Fort at Delhi, to ensure a perspective from which the holy throne can command a view of vast marble arena, where the congregation sat.

35. Courtyard with geometrical floral and birds designs.



Memorial tower built on the samadhi *of the young Atal Rai, son of the sixth Guru. Perhaps, it was modelled on the Victory Tower in Chitore.*

Gurudwara Baba Atal Sahib

Gurudwara Baba Atal Sahib is situated to the south of the Golden Temple, about 135 metres from Sarai Guru Ram Das. The nine-storey octagonal tower, standing 40 metres high, is the tallest building in Amritsar.

Originally a *samadhi,* or cenotaph, enshrining the remains of Atal Rai, a son of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, it was transformed, with the passage of time, into a gurudwara, because, in India, "the process of deification is aided by the tendency to develop the tomb raised over a man of eminence into a temple".[1]

According to popular tradition, Atal Rai, at the age of nine, restored his close friend Mohan, son of a widow, to life after his sudden demise. Guru Hargobind considered his son's act as being against the Sikh tradition and rebuked him for performing a feat involving a miracle and warned him that one's spiritual power should be displayed "in purity of doctrine and holiness of living". It is said that Atal Rai told his father that he would lay down his own life for breaking the law of nature by reviving his friend from the dead. So he went into a meditative trance and soon breathed his last. His pyre was lit on the bank of Kaulsar and, later on, to perpetuate his memory a monument was raised.[2] Although Atal Rai died at the age of nine, he was honoured with the title of *Baba,* a grand old man, for the extraordinary powers he had displayed. The present nine-storey building represents the nine years of Baba Atal's life.

Different authors have given different dates of its erection.[3] However, it appears that the present structure was raised sometime in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with repairs and renovations extended from time to time. The edifice is so designed as to have a double octagonal structure, one rising exteriorly and the other interiorly—the former also serving as circumambulatory. The storeys rising on the exterior and bigger octagonal base terminate at the sixth level, but the interior and smaller octagonal base supports nine storeys, allowing the three upper storeys, surmounted by a gilded dome, to rise considerably above the high point of the exterior elevation. The walls are so solidly built that a double staircase runs to the very top through the breadth of the wall itself, with a provision for entrance at each floor.

There are four doors on the ground floor, one on each of the cardinal sides. However, the main entrance faces east. Within the interior octagonal elevation, also having four doors, is kept the Guru Granth Sahib, enshrined in a beautifully wrought brass canopy, surmounted by an exquisite *chhatri.* The doors are made of silver and brass with elegantly embossed designs. Brass plates embossed with figures recounting Sikh and Hindu themes are affixed in a set of three plates on each of the four outer doors. The embossed brass sheets were presented by the devotees about the middle of the nineteenth century and after. A few of these bear names and addresses of the devotees and also the dates of presentation. The most typical and best specimens of the art of embossing on brass that thrived in Amritsar in the hands of craftsmen of Kucha Fakirkhana in the preceding century is seen in the plates embellishing the Baba Atal Gurudwara and one plate carries the trademark name of the craftsman.

The interior walls of the first floor are adorned with murals. Unfortunately, many of these have been obliterated beyond recognition and at present only 42 panels survive. A large series of paintings unfold, stage by stage, the life of Guru Nanak. The first painting in the series represents all the gods requesting the Almighty to send a holy person to earth to relieve it of the burden of Kali Yuga; and the last depicts Guru Nanak appointing Angad Dev as his successor to the Guru *gaddi.* Another series represents Sikh martyrs, including the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who laid down their lives for the cause of their faith.



37

38



Among the series of paintings pertaining to Guru Nanak, those depicting scenes from his childhood are of special interest. One of these, for instance, records a school scene, depicting Nanak, at the age of seven, commencing his education. Nanak, along with his father, Baba Kalu, is seated in front of the *mullah*, Kutbdin. Just at the start of the first lesson, young Nanak is seen explaining the meaning of the first letter to the *mullah.* Some of the pupils are waiting to show their *phatti* to the *mullah,* while others are either cleaning it or writing on it.

Murals in a considerably damaged state are also to be seen at the *deorhi* or the first entrance to the shrine. Large panels illustrate scenes from the life of Baba Atal and Guru Nanak; and the various stages of the battle of Muketsar. There are also two series of paintings: one, presenting the ten Gurus; and, the other, depicting members of the whole lineage of Baba Buddha Ji. Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand, two sons of Guru Nanak, are also portrayed. A few damaged paintings are also to be seen on the front wall of *tosha khana*, the treasury, located adjacent to the tower.

Michael Edwardes considers these murals to belong to the early nineteenth century.[4] But there are two strong reasons that suggest a later date. First, no reference to Pandit Brij Nath, who appears in one of the paintings showing Guru Nanak being taught by him, is to be found in *Janam Sakhis* written before the early nineteenth century. Secondly, the calligraphic style of the Gurmukhi script seen in these paintings evidently relates to a later period. Therefore, these murals appear to have been executed in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is believed that the muralist Mehtab Singh, born in 1871, executed these murals.[5]

Most of the personages portrayed in paintings, except Nanak, are presented in profile. Indian red, ochre and other earth colours, with frequent touches of gold, establishes the key to the colour scheme. A sense of perspective and foreshortening, though not perfect, gives the illusion of depth and volume. The figures are projected with the help of light and shade.

The observations made here are based on a visit to the shrine in 1970. In 1971, the entire painted area was repainted in gaudy colours in a technique ill-suited to the old murals—all in the name of 'renovation'.

The poor and the needy are fed and helped in the gurudwara of Baba Atal. Throughout the day, devotees come to pay homage, bringing prepared eatables to be distributed among whosoever is present in the shrine. This has made the following saying popular among the people, not only of Amritsar but of the entire Punjab: "Baba Atal Pakian Pakaian Ghal" (Baba Atal sends prepared meals).

(*For footnotes, please see page 72*)

— KANWARJIT KANG

37, 38. *The two bas reliefs carried out in gilded copper show Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh (below). The characterisation of the individuals achieved in metal is sharp and clear. The tableaux are arranged as in the wall paintings on the same theme. The quietism of the panel, in which Guru Nanak dominates, releases soft feelings in the spectator, while the dramatic gestures of Guru Gobind Singh and his followers compel activist thoughts.*



Painting and Prayer

A note on hieratic pictorial art under the Sikhs

One of the primary needs of man, in any civilisation, has been for shelter and its protection by magical symbols.

From very early times, the cave, the mud-hut, the house, was considered to be a tenancy at will given by God to a family for a life span. And it was lived in, subject to the blessings of the Gods, by appeasement of the demons, and by exalting it to the status of a shrine.

Thus the family ennobled the everyday life by chanting prayers, cleaning the house, redecorating it with symbols, and continuously reviving the circadian rhythm of the body-soul by the exercise of energies.

In fact, the existentialist idea of tenancy on earth within the Maya (the illusory) world, away from God, made for tensions which could only be resolved partly by a visit to the community temple and partly through acts which might uplift one from the torpor and ennui of dailiness, in the midst of a fragmented life, to some communion, however dimly realised, with the One.

In this sense, a painting on the top panel of the doorway, the threshold, or the wall, with the sacred swastika, the open hand, the tree of life, the flowers, the sun, the moon and stars, was an accepted part of the ritual through which people sustained their intimate personal relations with the cosmos.

It was not strange, therefore, that, when Amritsar grew from a village to a town and then a city—and first, mud-huts, then brick houses, and later *havelis* for the rich were built—the inhabitants would either do the ritual paintings on the walls themselves, or get craftsmen to do the floral decorations, and the richer patrons involved skilled artisans to do wall paintings, after they had carved wooden doorways and windows or embossed them with brass, silver or gold.

The more primitivist drawings and paintings were those in which the females of the households outlined the symbols of nature, fertility and cosmic consciousness.

Floral, animal and human forms, painted by the craftsmen, embodied the traditional sense of the terrors of existence and the unravelling of the mystery of nature. The highly skilled artisans, patronised by the rich, rendered the traditional myths and legends of the gods, saints and heroes.

All these expressions remained undercurrents from which mundane life was often heightened, in bright colours, challenging forms or gracious visions, in the tradition of folk art ever surviving in the labyrinths of the racial unconscious.

Most foreign and Western educated critics base their appreciation of Indian art on the notion of the classical art of the great courts of Europe or the fine art of the middle sections. They do not believe that in every part of India wall paintings preceded, or were parallel with, miniature paintings on bark or palm-leaf or paper.

We must then trace the sources of the more subtle and free expressions of the court painters, say of the Pahari areas, to the swiftly executed bold and naive creations of ordinary men and women. As already suggested, the symbolic drawing was integral for the protection of the house, indispensable decor for the heightening of the everyday life, to be brooded upon in odd moments, till it was recreated before the eyes of the beholder as a reminder of the need for a 'reversal' of one's being.

We can only speculate what creative arts flourished in Amritsar from the sixteenth century

39. *The large contours of Siva's moonface are obviously modelled on the Saivite miniatures on the same theme from the Pahari area. Executed in mid-nineteenth century, the brushwork is resilient, sensitive and glows with warm colours.*

onwards. Ostensibly, a small village settlement had grown by the "pool of nectar", near the abode of Guru Amar Das.

The Sikh faith, as preached by Guru Nanak, had been against the worship of idols. Guru Nanak himself deprecated glorifications of his person. All the same, as the features of the saint, specially in old age, with a moon face and round white beard, a tight turban on his head, have continued to appear, in a stylised form, for four hundred years, it is likely that his features had been drawn by some devotee towards the end of his life, as also the figures of his two constant companions, Bhai Mardana and Bhai Bala. Later, the stories, fables and myths of Guru Nanak's wandering life became popular among the folk, because his teaching was by the example of his doings. And it is possible that some craftsmen among the lay followers began to illustrate these legends. The primitivist character of most of the *Janam Ṣakhis* which have come down from the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century, except for the finely drawn Pahari drawings in the Chandigarh Museum, is witness to the prevalence of a folk art in the service of the Sikh faith. The Hindu merchants, divines and priests, who built shrines for their own worship brought images of Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Krishna and Siva for their ritual.

The surviving decorations of the same period show that the floral designs of the Muslim craftsmen, already visible at the end of the sixteenth century on the walls of the caravanserai of Najm-ud-din, seem to have entered the repertory of artisans employed to carry out the wall paintings in the Hari Mandir.

There is not much evidence to prove anything more than this resemblance of the decorative art of the Mughals and the Sikhs. But it is likely that the taste for opulence in architecture and decor of Shah Jehan's time had become legendary among the peoples of northern India; and, though the Sikhs were resisting the inroads of Mughal authority on their lives, they emulated the example, in their own humble way, of the splendorous court of Agra and Delhi.

The impress of the Imperial style had certainly spread, specially after Aurangzeb, to the feudal states all over India, as the craftsmen drifted to minor courts through the Emperor's rigid anti-hedonism. In this way, the Mughal rhythms, based on geometrical proportions, the use of marble for purity of feeling, the light and shade effects, and abstract design, had come to be accepted for all palatial structures. The pigeon-houses of Rajasthan, the Bengali village tapering roof for *chattris* brought by Raja Man Singh, and the synthesis achieved by Sawai Jai Singh in the planned city of Jaipur were now part of the repertory of the craftsmen of northern India.

Culture as 'cultivation of the soil of life', through the builder-worshipper participation in the traditional communities, was already current from the time of the pujapath with flowers and lighting wick lamps and burning incense, through all periods. The highest reaches of artistic skill could not be attained without liberal donations beyond the cotton purses of the peasant pilgrims. But there is no doubt that the illiterate mass was educated in the psalms of god and could pay for certain holy images and forms in brass, wood, stone, plaster, clay or on cloth. Thus became possible the ritualistic embossings, drawings and paintings, which could concretise the 'Nam' and other holy images.

And when, after generations of bitter struggle, the muscular genius of Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought the various Sikh *misls* together, and he made Amritsar the spiritual capital of his hard won Empire, his largesse made it possible to patronise the accomplished craftsmen from various parts of his own kingdom, as well as Rajasthan and the Pahari courts. These artisans were to re-define the folk symbols, images and legends, into the 'mainstream' sustained by the hill chiefs.

This patronage lasted only for a generation and could not, for lack of time, achieve an important Sikh miniature painting style like that which the sons and grandsons of Pandit Seu had captured in Jammu, Guler, Kangra, Chamba, Sujanpur Tira, Nadaun, Lumbargaon and elsewhere.

If we do not look into Amritsar for those finished court paintings, celebrating the loves of Krishna and Radha, but accept the kind of intimate ritual art, then we will find that the talents of the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim craftsmen, were able to extend the consciousness of the people with the new dynamic culture of the ten Gurus, in certain chosen spaces on the wall of Sikh shrines, *akharas* and Hindu temples, silent colour areas which are part of the flow of Indian culture.

The parallel for the icons, the group images, the portraits, animals and flowers on the walls and the surviving embossed reliefs and other pictures, is rather with early Buddhist art in Bharhut and Sanchi or with the early Christian art of Europe, than with the works of the near-secular tradition worked out by the Pahari painters from the hangovers of Vaishnava inspiration, worked into miniatures in the hills under the influence of the delicate lines and pastel colours and acute awareness of figurative forms of the Mughal kalam. It is the inspiration of 'loving kindness' in the face of Guru Nanak that we have to see. It is the burning light in the vibrant visage of Guru Gobind Singh that comes through, in spite of the corrosion of time. It is the innocence of children in the school scene in Baba Atal, where we can sense the beginning of evolution of 'awareness'. There is a scene of Vishnu in his incarnation as half horse-half man destroying the demon Hayagriva, which must have filled the eyes of devotees with terror. The scene in the Akhara Bala Nand, of Draupadi being unveiled by the Kurus, must have reminded the folk of the angers of the internecine wars of the clans. There is the vital drawing of Siva and Parvati on a wall in a temple near Bazar Machina, obviously an idyll of the creator won over by the goddess after long penances. There are the holy men in meditation to make the folk aware that too much attachment to the earth and its 'dailiness' is not the way. The sprouting of flowers and plants and trees are evidences to the distillation of Guru Nanak's teaching, that everything in life moves. The suns, the moons and the stars in the paintings on the walls of *havelis* related the beholders from inside the big houses to the cosmos itself.

The noblemen had enacted scenes of battles, showing heroic Sikh warriors fighting against the Ferungis. And, after the visits of Emily Eden, sister of Governor-General Lord Auckland, to Amritsar, the rumours of the three dimensional perspective of the European pictures had spread among the craftsmen. So the bazar paintings, in bold contours, and crude lithographs in books, as well as woodcuts, began to be executed, according to the new 'fashun'. And the firm line of the drawings of craftsmen shows that there was no dearth of talent for absorbing the European sense of line and form into the indigenous idiom. The vitalities of the folk were perennial and have continued to refurbish the demands of the towns, even though the craftsmen lost their inherited perspectives.

Our empathy for these images has to come from absorbing Guru Nanak's emphasis on change and evolution in life, which he shared with the Sufi saints, and the insistence on cultivating depth through work as prayer.

The 'cultivation of the soil' in Sikh thought is intended to dispel ignorance. The face of holy men and saints and sages were worshipped, as expressive of understanding which may inspire mercy.

The images always emerge as simplified primitivist forms, where the intense passion of piety may be recognised.

— MULK RAJ ANAND

Survivals of Wall Paintings in Amritsar

INTRODUCTION

The art of mural painting, which, in a somewhat rough style, had for long been common in eighteenth-century Punjab[1], became a popular mode of embellishment in the first quarter of the following century. It flourished under the Sikh regime, struggled for existence through rapid social changes that came in the train of the British, and decayed in the great transformation that was brought about in the Punjab by the turn of the century.

Amritsar formed the nucleus of this activity, where almost every structure, of any pretensions, was embellished with murals. The extant remains of wall paintings, with murals painted in the *thakurdwara* of Raghunath Das as far back as 1750 A.D.,[2] enable one to see how this mode of embellishment in the city remained perpetually in vogue for nearly two hundred years.

After 1803 A.D., when Amritsar was incorporated in the dominion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, its cultural, economic and political development accelerated and the art of mural painting, which had been taking roots in the town since mid-eighteenth century, flowered briskly in the era of pros-



40

perity. To begin with, Ranjit Singh repaired the principal building of the Golden Temple, roofed it with sheets of copper gilt[3] and commenced the embellishment of its walls in various arts like *mohra-kashi, gach, tukri* and *jaratkari* works. Skilled masons and craftsmen were specially brought from Chaniot, a town in district Jhang, now in Pakistan, to work in the Golden Temple.

Many members of the new Sikh aristocracy had begun to settle in Amritsar permanently, while others had their *havelis* and *bungas* built in the town to go to whenever they wished to sojourn in the religious capital and pay homage to the central shrine. This resulted in immense construction activity and, within a few years, Amritsar was replete with magnificent buildings. Although the new Sikh aristocracy was devoid of any great artistic tradition, nevertheless, the urge to surround itself with glory appears to have been intense.[4] The newly attained wealth allowed many to employ masons for years together in the construction of their mansions, in brick and lime, and the best muralists of the time were hired to adorn the walls. In fact, for the status-seekers, murals became a big symbol.

40. The composite lunette showing Guru Nanak and his nine successors, with the two musicians below, indicates the continuity of the tradition of accomplished wall painting well into the nineteenth century.

41-43. These three symbolic pictures are based on the principle of image-as-suggestion, for seeing into the picture more than was presented. For instance, the scene of Draupadi's undraping makes the onlooker contemplate evil incarnate. The holymen on a baradari *give value to meditation. Maharaja Ranjit Singh with his sons exalts militancy.*



41



42



43



44



44a

44. *The 'loving sight' with which the young god Siva, with his lyrical flow of hair, looks with wonder at his demure bride, Parvati, is an adaptation of the ancient myth of conjugal felicity. The protraiture is realistic, with its detailed reproduction of the nose-ring of Parvati, the flowery jewels in her hair and on the neck. The grace of Guler, as in the miniature below, is absent. The chiaroscuro of the fresco reveals, through its shadows, a rougher texture of love than in the small Pahari painting.*

44a. *A miniature showing Siva and Parvati in Guler style.*



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45. *The Kashiwala remnant shows the stiffening of the brush in the glorification of the two* mahants.

46. *The depiction of the dramatic fight between the man-horse avatar of Vishnu and the demon in the Sangalwala Akhara retains the ability to manipulate the brush skilfully in representing dramatic action. Living belief informs this primitivist painting.*



46



47

47. *This lunette of Guru Nanak with his followers shows a tendency to mechanical repetition.*


ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅੰਤਰ ਧਿਆਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਰਤੀ
ਸੋਹਲੇ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗਉੜੀ ਦੀਪਕੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧
ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਮ ਦਾ
ਉਪਦੇਸ ਦੇ
ਰਹੇ ਹਨ.

Simultaneously, with the new Sikh aristocracy, merchants and traders from all over the Punjab began to settle in Amritsar. Even Marwari traders, known as *Nauhrias* in local parlance, were invited to Amritsar by Ranjit Singh in order to establish it as a commercial centre. The wealth acquired by the traders encouraged the erection of splendid temples, adorned with murals. Their houses, too, were built in brick and lime and murals used to be an indispensable ornamentation thereof.

The *jagirs* and eleemosynary grants given by Ranjit Singh as *dharmarths* to several shrines and institutions of Amritsar also helped the mural art to flourish. Thus, with liberal funds at their disposal, the monasteries known as *akharas,* belonging to the Udasi and Nirmala sects, vied with each other to provide a better impression of their establishments.

Amritsar, which had hitherto remained a religious centre, underwent a far-reaching transformation under the Sikh regime and synthesised into a religious, commercial and cultural complex. Under the manifold impact, the walls of temples, gurudwaras, *havelis, bungas, burjs, akharas, dharamshalas, samadhis* and gateways were invariably adorned with paintings.

The surviving remains of murals in Amritsar form a very small proportion of what must have once existed. It is least surprising because mural paintings are most susceptible to destruction by natural causes. The extant paintings, however, are sufficient in number to evidence that wall paintings formed an essential adjunct both of religious and secular architecture of Amritsar. Although in the city there are about 50 edifices still with paintings on the walls, it is not possible, in this study, to attempt a description of all these. Therefore, only a few prominent places with comparatively well-preserved murals may be mentioned here:

BALA NAND

These four remnants of wall paintings from the *samadhi* of Bala Nand are from different periods. The imposing building is a huge three-storied structure got built by Mahant Bhishamber Nath in 1888 A.D. Almost all paintings are in decay except some damaged murals in a room on the second storey.

The earliest painting seems spirited and evocative of piety.

The scene showing the undraping of Draupadi by the Kurus is sought to be dramatised; the hard strokes of the brushwork and the rigid figures are deliberately contrived.

The Durbar scene showing Maharaja Ranjit Singh with his sons is a somewhat static late nineteenth-century painting.

SANGALWALA

The fresco showing Guru Nanak talking with holymen is from the wall of Akhara Sangalwala, built by Mahant Pritam Das in 1786 A.D. Situated in Katra Ahluwalia, the shrine stands below ground level, with a complex structure and a *baradari*. It was richly embellished and has sixteen surviving murals. The style of painting is primitivist-hieratic.

48. The montage of holymen, on the ceiling of the archway on the approach road to Baba Atal, is a late 'action-picture' showing the warmth of the congregation.

MANGANI RAM

Vishnu incarnated as half-horse and half-man, as Hayagriva, is shown destroying a demon also named Hayagriva. One of the vital paintings from the *samadhi* of Mangani Ram.

KASHIWALA

This mid-eighteenth century mural recreates the atmosphere of Sikh holymen as they foregathered near shrines. The painter is obviously borrowing Mughal perspective of the *baradari*, but is unable to achieve the court finesse.

DARIYANA MAL

The large sweep of lines in this wall painting in Akhara Dariyana Mal dramatises the conjugal felicity of Siva and Parvati. The configuration of both the faces is in the fluid line derived from Guler as will be obvious from the miniature reproduced. The contours of the loving figures seem to be late-nineteenth century. This is the only mural painting which evidences to the actual influence of Pahari paintings on the walls of Amritsar, as may be evident from the Guler miniature reproduced alongside.

In addition to these edifices, important murals (discussed elsewhere) are to be seen in the Golden Temple and Baba Atal.

THEMES

Amritsar murals present a great variety of themes.

The wall paintings in the shrines, *akharas* and *havelis* of Amritsar present a great variety of themes: myths and legends of Guru Nanak from the *Janam Sakhis*; Saiva, Vaishnava and Puranic stories of Gods of the Hindus, and Muslim holymen. Interspersed among them are Sikh princes, noblemen and European officers. This shows the acceptance of all the vitalities which energised the Punjab, specially during the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. The dominantly primitivist feeling is evidenced in the two-dimensional perspective in which are assimilated historical events as part of the total myth. The relation between life and art is continuous.

TECHNIQUE

Most of the Amritsar murals have been executed in the process known as *mohra-kashi.* It was also called *Jodhpuri hunar*, probably because the technique was borrowed from Jodhpur, the place where it was originally practised. The technique roughly involved four principal factors: (1) the 'carrier' which supported the ground, (2) the 'ground' on which the painting was executed, (3) the material or the pigments used in elaborating the design, (4) the 'binding medium' or the means by which the pigments were attached to the ground.

Brick walls, made from fine bricks baked to a fresh looking red, laid in lime-sand mortar, invariably, constituted the ideal 'carrier'. Although it appears that no serious effort was done for waterproofing the walls, nevertheless, in the process of spraying bricks before setting in mortar, nonabsorbent bricks were replaced with good bricks to remove the ever present possibility of efflorescence.

Lime was the basic material in the formation of 'ground'. It was perfectly slaked to prevent blisters appearing in the ground. It was kept under water for at least a week, though a much

longer time was desirable. Every day the water was changed so as to leave a very fine sediment. Then it was strained through a fine cloth and the substance that remained in the cloth was called *pora*, equivalent to *burga* of Rajasthan. The other materials used in the formation of ground were called *kutta* and *doga*. The former is the rough remains of white marble plaster, obtained from the cloth-filtered material; and the latter, the curd-like residue of white plaster, prepared from burnt and drenched marble duly cloth-filtered. Clay was also used in the formation of ground, corresponding to *makul* plaster applied in the Hills. Not infrequently fine clean sand, preferably banksand, was also used in addition to or instead of marble meal and marble dust.

The brick walls were wetted well to receive the coat of *ariccio* — the plaster layer covering the masonry. Plaster made of slaked lime and sand was driven well into the joints and then beaten all over with a long strip of wood used edgeways until it became slightly dry. It was then carefully levelled to receive the coat of *intonaco*: finely grained plaster layer covering the rougher *ariccio*. The *intonaco* plaster was composed of perfectly slaked lime and finely pulverised marble meal, made into the consistency of a cream, applied to the wet wall plaster and rubbed over the ground with a flat stone to make it set. When plaster grew a little dry and sticky, it was polished with an agate polishing stone until the surface was quite smooth and glazed.

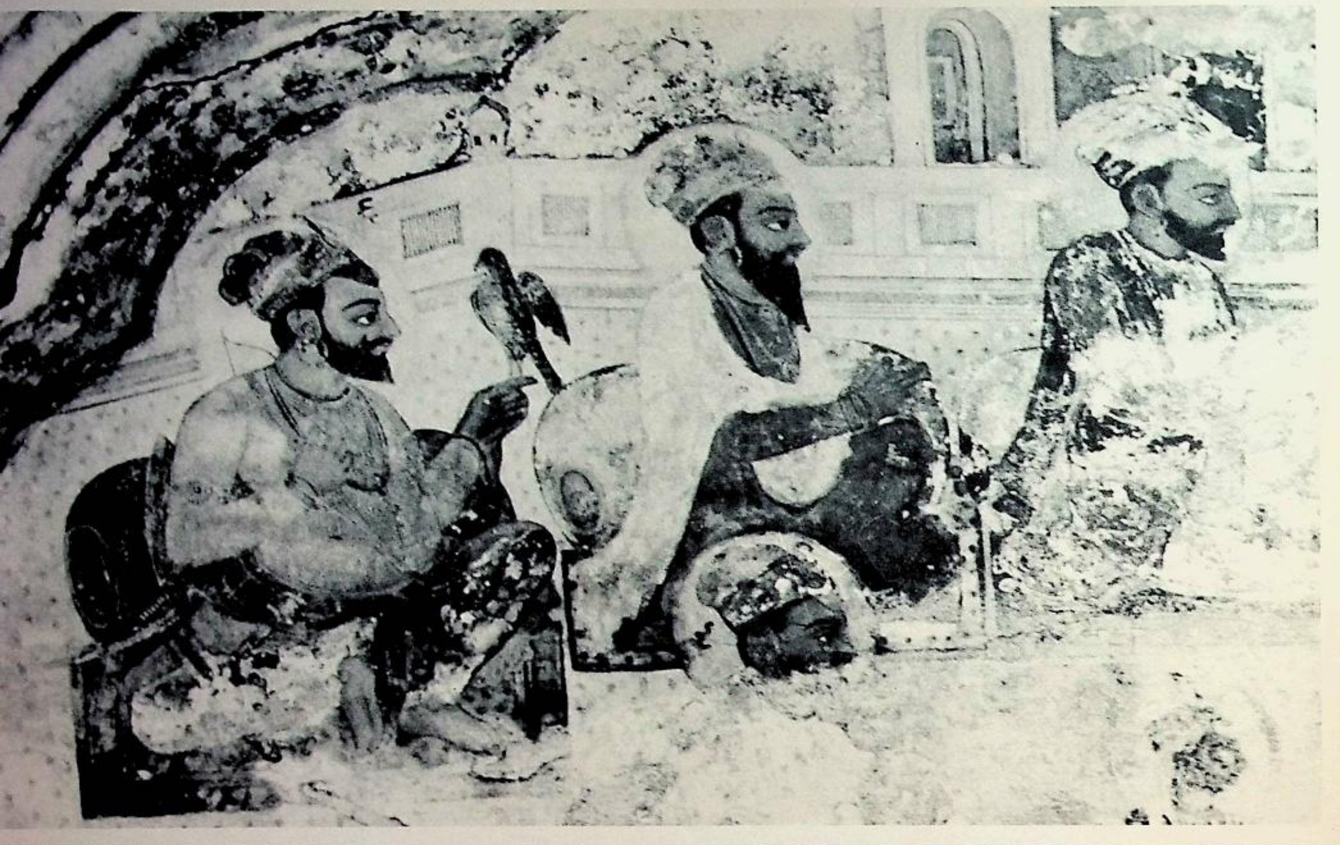
The pigments used in elaborating the design were mostly earth and minerals, as few others could stand the action of lime. According to the late Bhai Gian Singh Naqqash, only six colours —red, green, yellow, blue, black and white—were used in wall painting. Red was prepared from indigenous clay called *hurmachi*. It was pulverised by constant rubbing with water on stone slabs. For obtaining green colour, small chips of *terra verta*, called *sang-i-sabz* were pulverised with water. Yellow was obtained from yellow clay and blue was made from lapis lazuli. Black was prepared by pulverising burnt coconut crust or from the smoke of mustard oil burnt in earthen lamps. *Doga* served as white colour.

When colours, mixed in lime water, were applied to the still wet plaster surface, the pigments soaked through the hydrate of lime. In the process of drying, a chemical change took place: the hydroxide was converted first into oxide and then gradually it changed into calcium carbonate and the resulting surface was reasonably resistant to atmospheric action. But, unlike in Italian process of fresco-buono, the colours were united to the plaster not only chemically but also by mechanical action of beating colour with trowel into the surface of the ground. When painting was not done on wet plaster, glue made from tree gum was used as a 'binding agent'.

In addition to the technicalities referred to above, the making of a cartoon, or a drawing prepared to the size of mural, was also one of the important preliminary requirements of mural painting. The full-size drawings of the whole compositions were drawn in pencil or charcoal on a sheet of reasonably thick paper. The entire drawing was then perforated and it was called *khaka*. Pouncing was done by rubbing over the perforated lines with a ball filled with charcoal dust. Many a competent hand did not make use of *khaka* for they had developed the faculty of executing drawings direct on the *intonaco* surface.

PAINTERS

The traditional anonymity associated with the craftsmen of India makes it difficult to discover the names of individual painters. Following this characteristic tradition, most of the painters, who painted murals in Amritsar, remain anonymous. Despite this, evidence of several painters having been engaged in embellishing edifices with murals has become available, but enough material for attempting a detailed and accurate study of the painters in question is still wanting.



49



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49. *Composition of seated Gurus, on the walls of the archway to Baba Atal.*

50. *The principle of representation-as-decoration succeeds even more in the vital configurations on the archway in this late nineteenth-century picture. The bazar-style realism enters the school scene in which Guru Nanak is shown even as a boy teaching the* mullah. *This is an adaptation of a* Janam Sakhi *scene.*

51. *A vigorous portrait of Guru Tegh Bahadur, on a wall of the Akal Takht, receiving a messenger with two horses.*



51

52. *In this equestrian portrait, Guru Gobind Singh is shown riding away from Anandpur fort. Inset in a corner of the Hari Mandir shrine, it is obviously a miniature enlarged into a fresco, showing the influence of the Pahari school where representation was made into decoration as a convention.*



52

The lineage of the most prominent painters, who in addition to other branches of pictorial art also worked as muralists, is to be traced to Kehar Singh. He himself is believed to have worked in the Golden Temple and at the Akal Takht.[6] To his credit goes the creation of a school of *naqqashes*[7] —beginning with his nephews, Kishan Singh and Bishan Singh, both of whom were wall painters in the *mohra-kashi* technique.[8] Bishan Singh was engaged in the adornment of the Golden Temple for a number of years. Floral designs were his forte,[9] which, interspersed with birds and animals, were executed with great perfection.

The descendants of Kishan Singh and Bishan Singh continued their parental occupation. Nihal Singh and Jawahar Singh, sons of Bishan Singh, were experts in allied arts of decoration applied to architecture, including the *mohra-kashi* technique of fresco painting, *gach* and *tukri* work. Their work still survives in the Golden Temple.

Kapur Singh, son of Kishan Singh, grew to be an eminent artist in the late nineteenth century, but his work was confined to paper and there is no evidence of his being employed in painting murals. However, his son, Sardul Singh, took to mural painting and his work can be seen on the walls of the temple of Daryanamal[10] and in many other Hindu shrines.[11] He also did some work on the walls of the Golden Temple.[12]

From amongst the relatives of the family of *naqqashes* originating from Kehar Singh, Mahant Ishar Singh, also a contemporary of the former, adopted the profession of a painter. His father, Bhai Ram Singh, was also a painter.[13] Most of Mahant Ishar Singh's work, said to be of high merit, was on the walls of the main *Darshani Deorhi*[14] leading to the Golden Temple, which, however, is now unfortunately covered up by marble slabs. He also painted murals in many Hindu temples of Amritsar.

Another family of painters which engaged in architectural decoration in Amritsar has come to light from the diary of Hari Singh, a painter adept in the use of architectural and ornamental lines. On a page of his diary he has recorded his painter-ancestors in the form of a genealogical tree. In all, he records ten names, starting from earliest ancestor Bidhi Chand, followed by Jawanda Mal, Sohan Lal, Bawa Singh, Sada Singh, Deva Singh, Lal Singh, Bishan Singh, Ganda Singh and Hari Singh. Since the diary imparts no other relevant information, we do not have any knowledge, however, about the works of these painters and the sites at which they were engaged in painting murals.

Atma Singh, who recently worked for some years to renovate the floral designs in the Golden Temple and the murals in the shrine of Baba Atal, belongs to a family of painters. His father Mehtab Singh, born in 1871, was an expert muralist who worked at the *thakurdwara* of Fakir Chand and at Baba Atal. Atma Singh's grandfather, Bhai Jawala Singh, was a muralist endowed with great talent and his adeptness in this field is evidenced from his work surviving in *akhara* Bala Nand.

A number of other mural painters from Amritsar are known. Jai Singh worked in the Golden Temple.[15] Jaimal Singh, born in 1860, was painter-cum-muralist.[16] He also worked in Baba Atal.[17] Hukam Singh[18] was another painter who worked along with Jaimal Singh and Mehtab Singh in executing murals in Baba Atal. Rudh Singh, Amir Singh, Ganesh Singh, Gian Singh, Kapur Singh, Puran Singh and Aroor Singh were all known and lived in Gali Naqqashan[19] or painters' alley, in Amritsar. They all excelled in floral decoration.

Bhai Gian Singh was the last competent painter. He served in the Golden Temple for about 32 years. With his death in 1953, the line of the traditional mural painters of Amritsar came to an end.

(*For footnotes, please see page 72*)

—KANWARJIT KANG

Janam Sakhis:

A Guler Series

As the lives of other saints of the world, so the pilgrimage of Guru Nanak—from birth to growth, through boyhood, the going away from home, adventures with holymen and the lay public, as well as the ordeals and afflictions of life—was rendered into certain myths and legends during the centuries after his passing away.

These life-stories do not make a biography in the contemporary sense; nor a history with a time sequence. They are hearsay tales, inspired by incidents, some of which may or may not have happened, but which the devotees wished to ascribe to the great teacher from love for him and adoration for his quest of the One God.

One of the popular compilations is Bala's *Janam Sakhi.* Bala is reputed to have been, with the rebeck player, Mardana, a constant companion of the Guru, as he went about from place to place. Later writers question his authenticity, specially because Bala talked of Guru Nanak's miracles, whereas the master himself is supposed to have said: "the only miracle I claim is the name of the Lord. . ."

Another *Janam Sakhi,* said to have been composed by Bhai Seva Das about 1588 A.D., found its way to the India Office Library, through the scholar Colebrooke. Not very different from Bala's *Janam Sakhi,* this seems to have been the basis of Macauliffe's comprehensive book, *The Sikh Religion.*

Another notable *Janam Sakhi* is attributed to Sodhi Mehervan, a relation of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev.

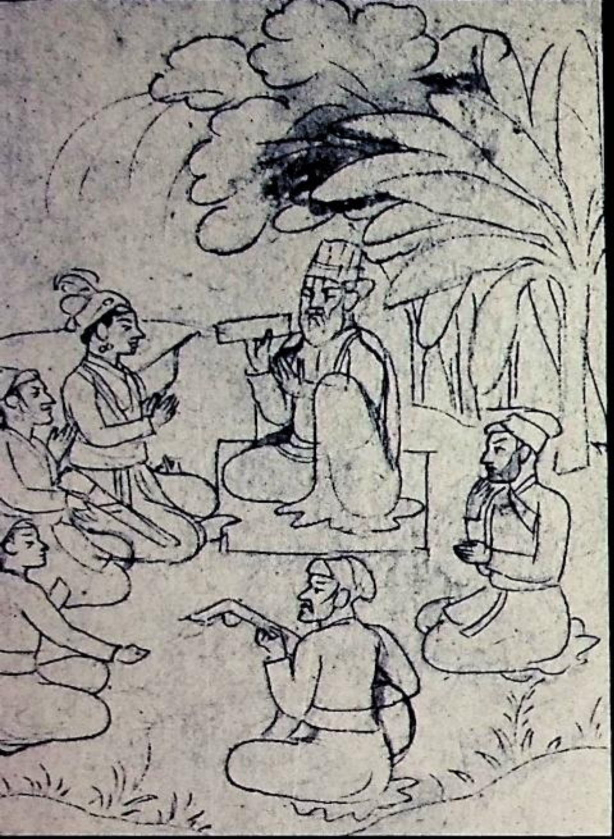
Charged by folk imagination and beckoning angels and fairies at will, as also showing Guru Nanak's confrontation of the demons, dacoits, misers and good folk, the stories have ethical undertones as in the *jatakas* or the Buddhist birth-stories.

Quite a few of these manuscripts have been illustrated with naive paintings in charming hot colours.

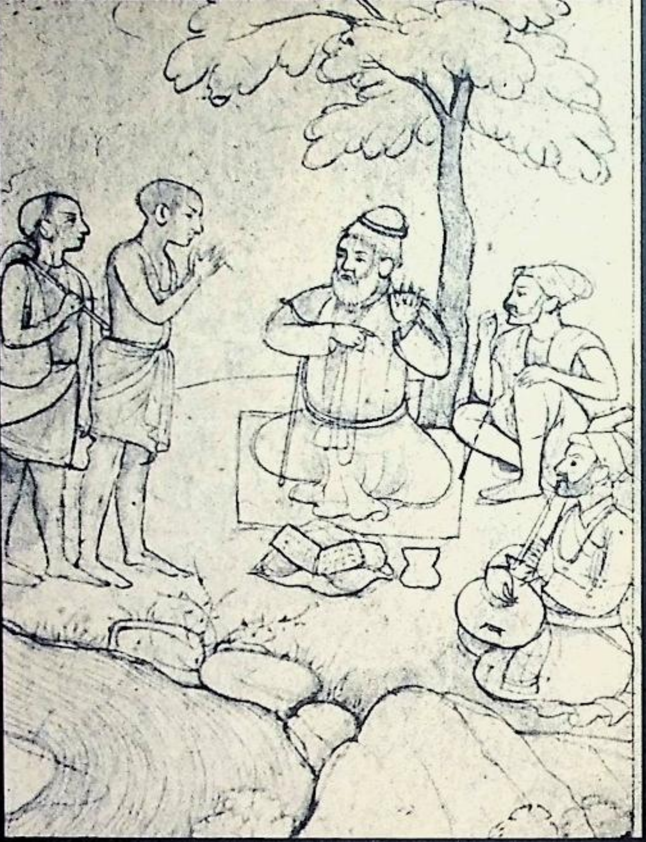
We reproduce a fine set of drawings, probably done by a Pahari craftsman at the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century. The curvaceous line of the figures evokes the search for harmony of Guru Nanak throughout his life. The incidents are rendered like little plays of St. Francis. The characters are individualised by an artist possessed of the wisdom of the heart, which is the core of the Sikh faith.

(MARG owes the information in this note to Sardar Khushwant Singh)

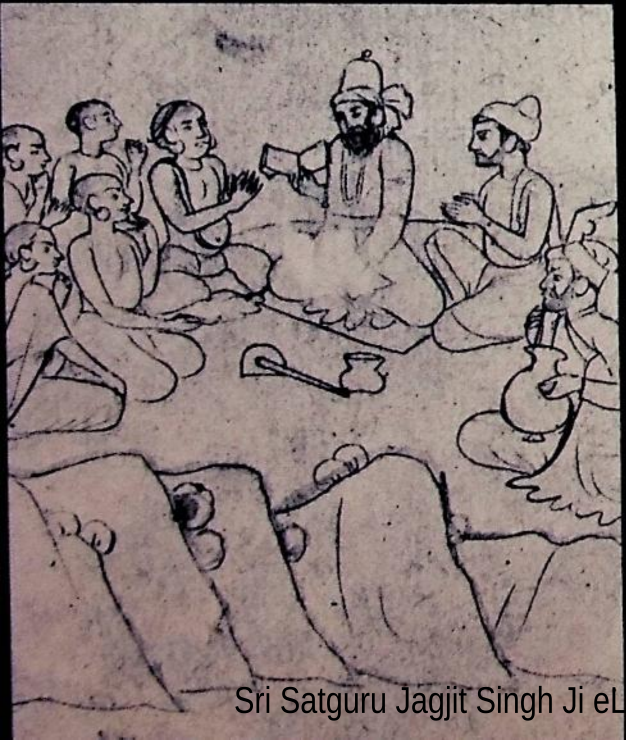
53. *Guru Nanak, Bala and Mardana with Maharaja Kamal Nain and his courtiers.*
54. *Guru Nanak and disciples at Silka Parbat.*
55. *Guru Nanak giving a sermon to Brahmins and Sadhus in Kashmir.*
56. *Guru Nanak in Karu Desh, converting the magic-making women of Tisiya Raj to faith in God.*
57. *Guru Nanak, Bala and Mardana in Kurukshetra, with ascetics.*
58. *Guru Nanak and Mardana in Mecca.*
59. *Guru Nanak giving a sermon at Ram Tirth.*
60. *Guru Nanak, Bala and Mardana encounter a demon, while Narad Muni looks on.*



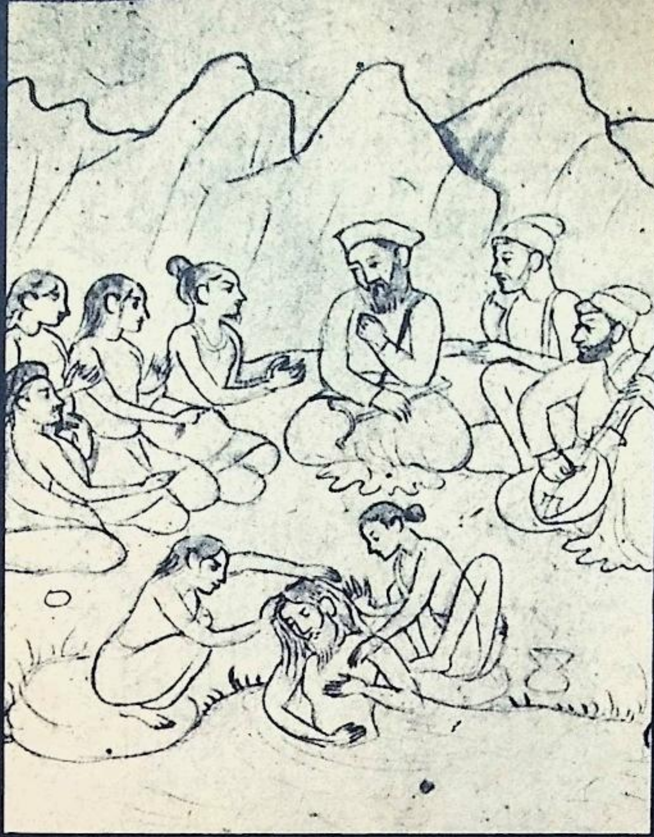
53



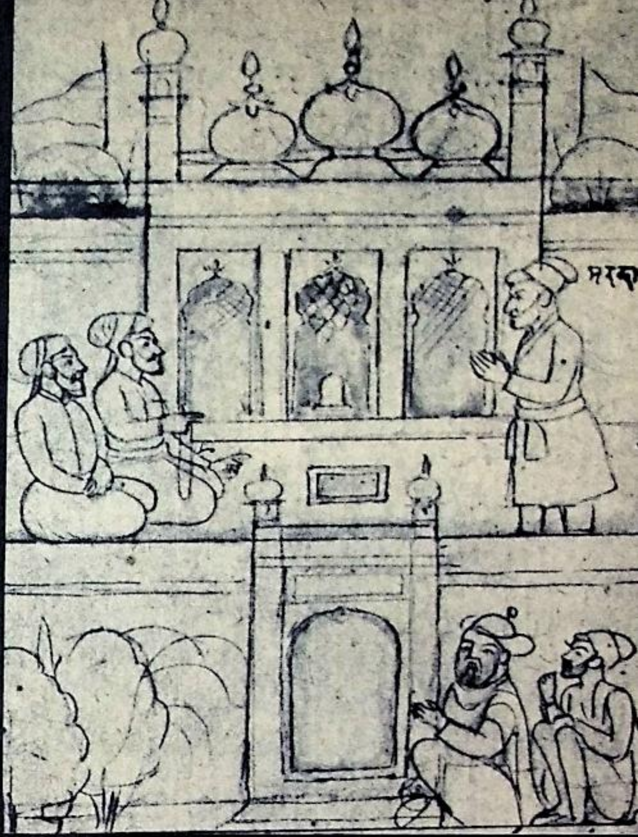
54



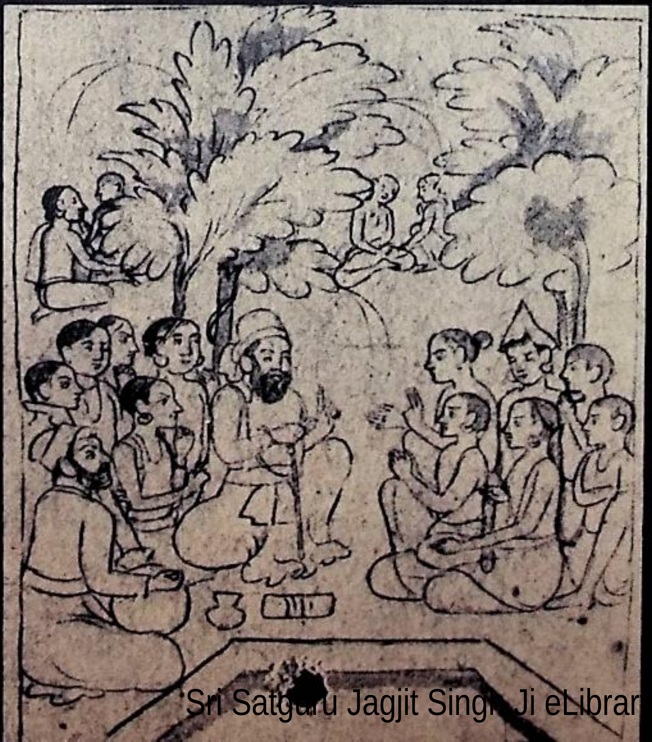


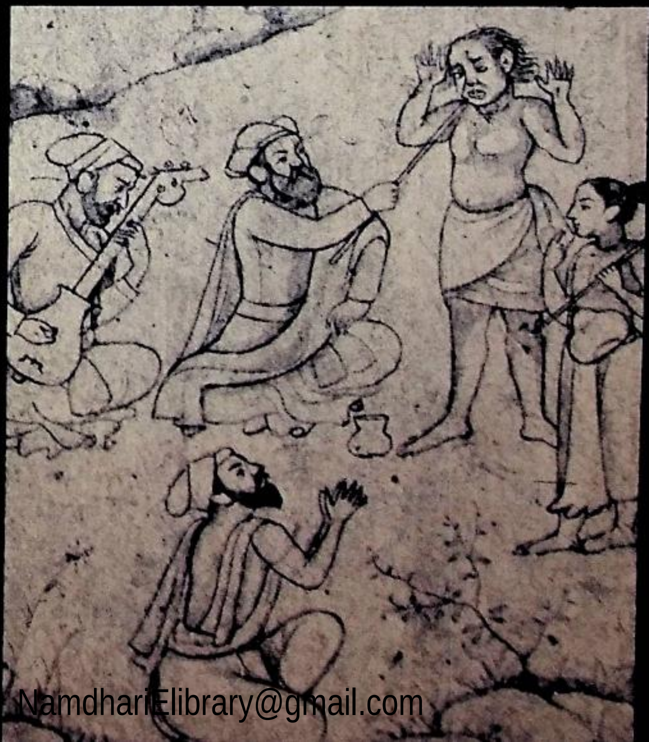


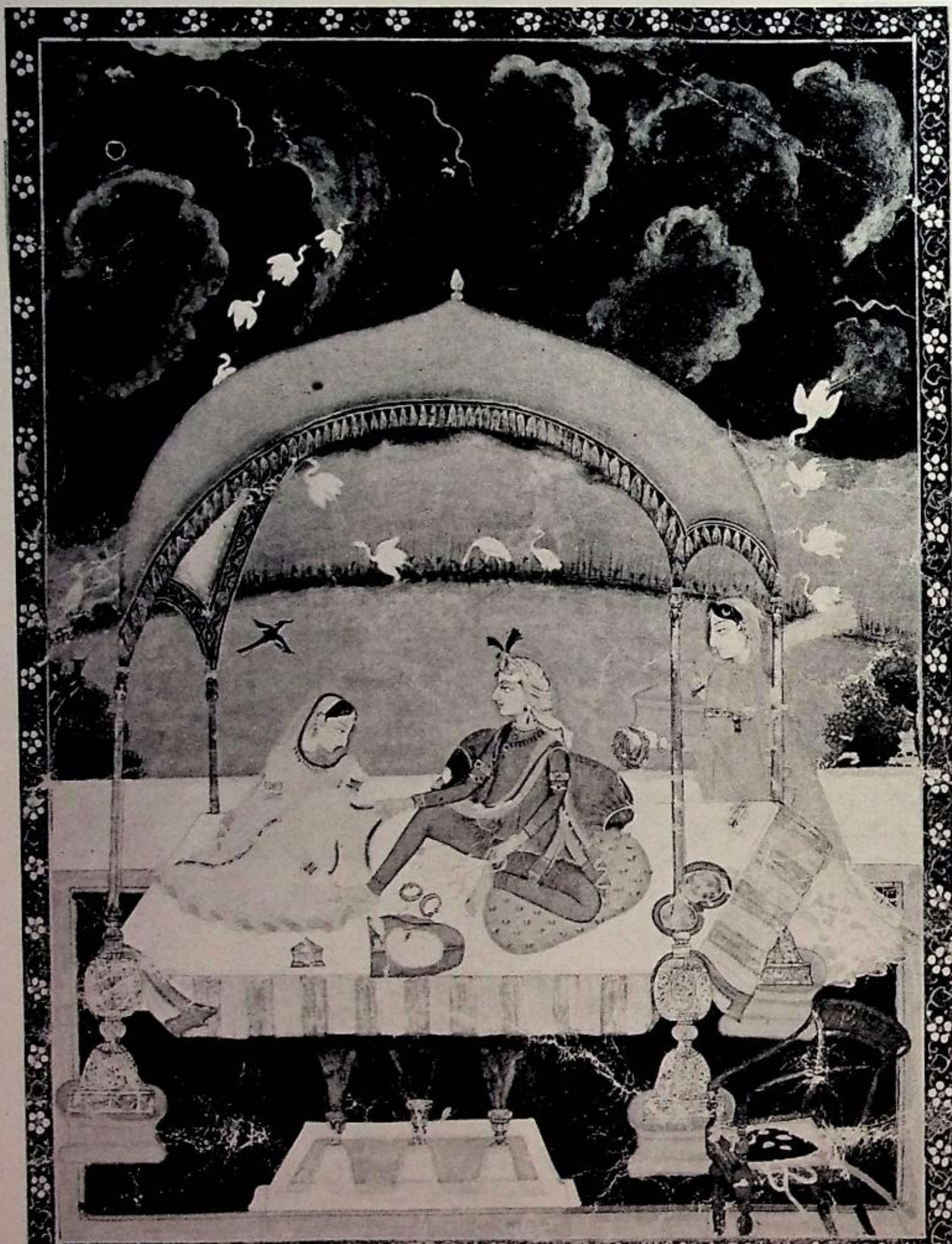
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58







61

61. This unique idyllic scene, probably showing Raja Hira Singh, the favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, dallying with a hill princess is couched in the idiom of the sophisticated Guler style. The Sikh nobility acquired the taste for miniature paintings of the Pahari area rather late. The influence of the hill courts remained limited. 'Pretty pictures' were often collected as finished miniatures from the hill courts and not prepared in Lahore or Amritsar.



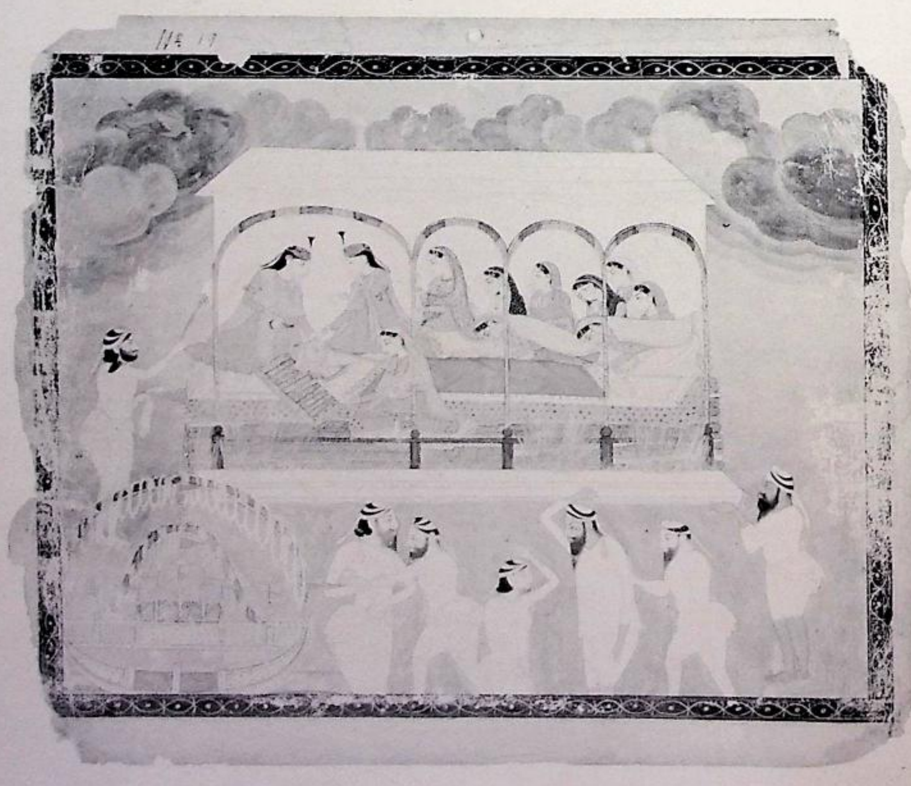
62

62. *The portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on horseback glorifies the militant general into a near-god with a halo round his head, derived from Mughal miniature portraits of royalty. Dressed in a yellow costume, he is shown on the way to a shrine. It is well known that the Maharaja was blind of the left eye and did not wish to be portrayed. Obviously, this is an imaginary picture done in the Pahari miniature style. The drawing is bold, the pastel colours are fluid, but there is a deliberate attempt at accentuation which makes the pose of the Maharaja on the horse rather rigid.*



64

4. *The Durbar scene with Sikh and Hindu courtiers seated on both sides of a Sikh sardar. Dr. Archer suggests that the Sardar may be Desa Singh Majithia, the Sikh Governor of Kangra, being feted on his own wedding to some hill princess. The lively group of musicians and gift-bearers and nobles is a dramatic composition.*



62

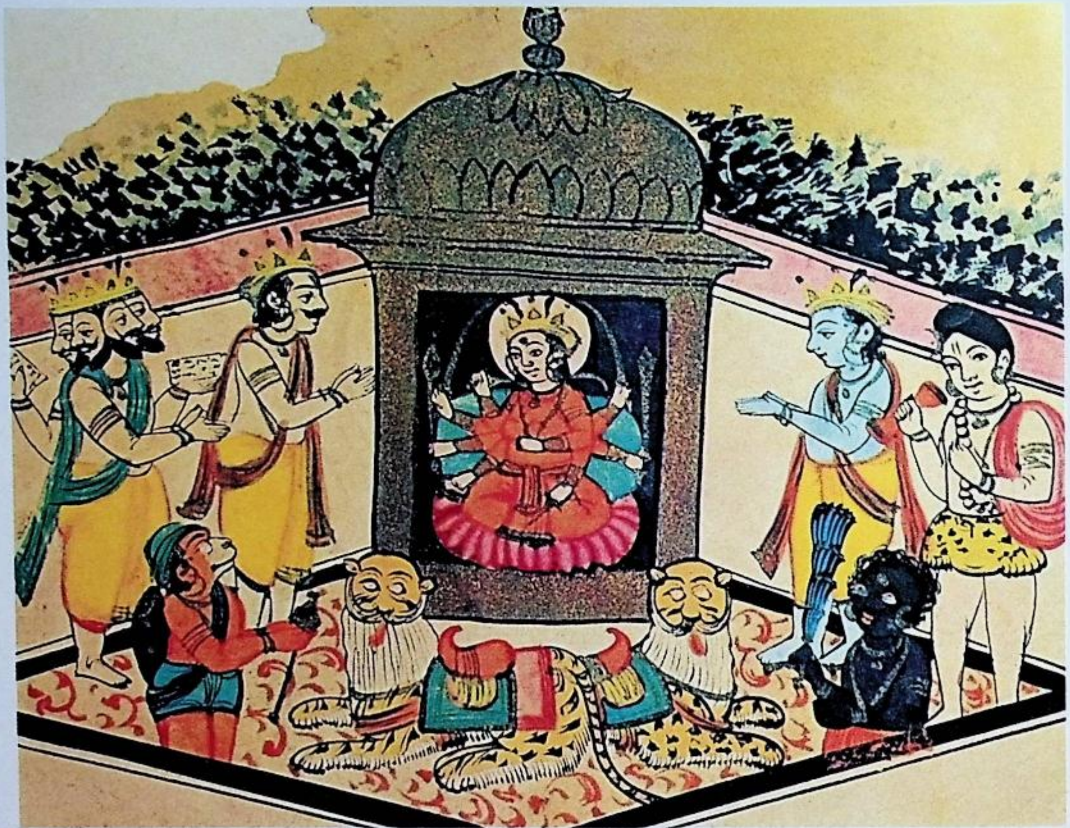
63

63. *The drama of the three Nadaun ranis of Maharaja Ranjit Singh preparing to immolate themselves with the corpse of the dead monarch is presented in this miniature. The hill custom of* sati *was perhaps rendered by a Pahari painter, resident in the Lahore court. The soft colours of the painting, with solemn faces and overhanging heavy clouds, capture the gloom occasioned by the death of a conqueror and the enforced sacrifice of his queens.*

65. *This portrait of Raja Dhian Singh, in the intimate circle of the Emperor, retains the vitality of the paintings of Maharaja Balwant Singh of Jammu. The brushwork is fluid. The individualised figures are well composed. The animals seem animated.*



65



66 *Seated Durga in a shrine.*

66



67 *Kalia demon.*

67

Folk Paintings

In spite of the dominant Sikh attitude towards the gods of Hindu mythology, the conglomeration of many Hindus in the city of Amritsar led to the building of Vaishnavite, Saivite and Kali temples. Also, images in stone, brass and on paper remained current, reflective of the substratum of the ethos of the majority folk of the population.

The picture of Durga seated in a shrine is significant because the Sikhs, particularly Guru Gobind Singh, adopted her incarnation, as Chandi, to inspire militancy.

Hanuman, the Monkey God, with his vitalist powers, was also conceded many shrines near the Golden Temple and his legendary deeds became purposeful for the fighting Sikhs. The immigrant Hindus, from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, brought the legends of Krishna with them.

Krishna's vanquishing the snake-demon. Kaliya was preferred for its allegory of the eternal struggle between good and evil.

KEHAR SINGH, A PUNJABI ARTIST OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



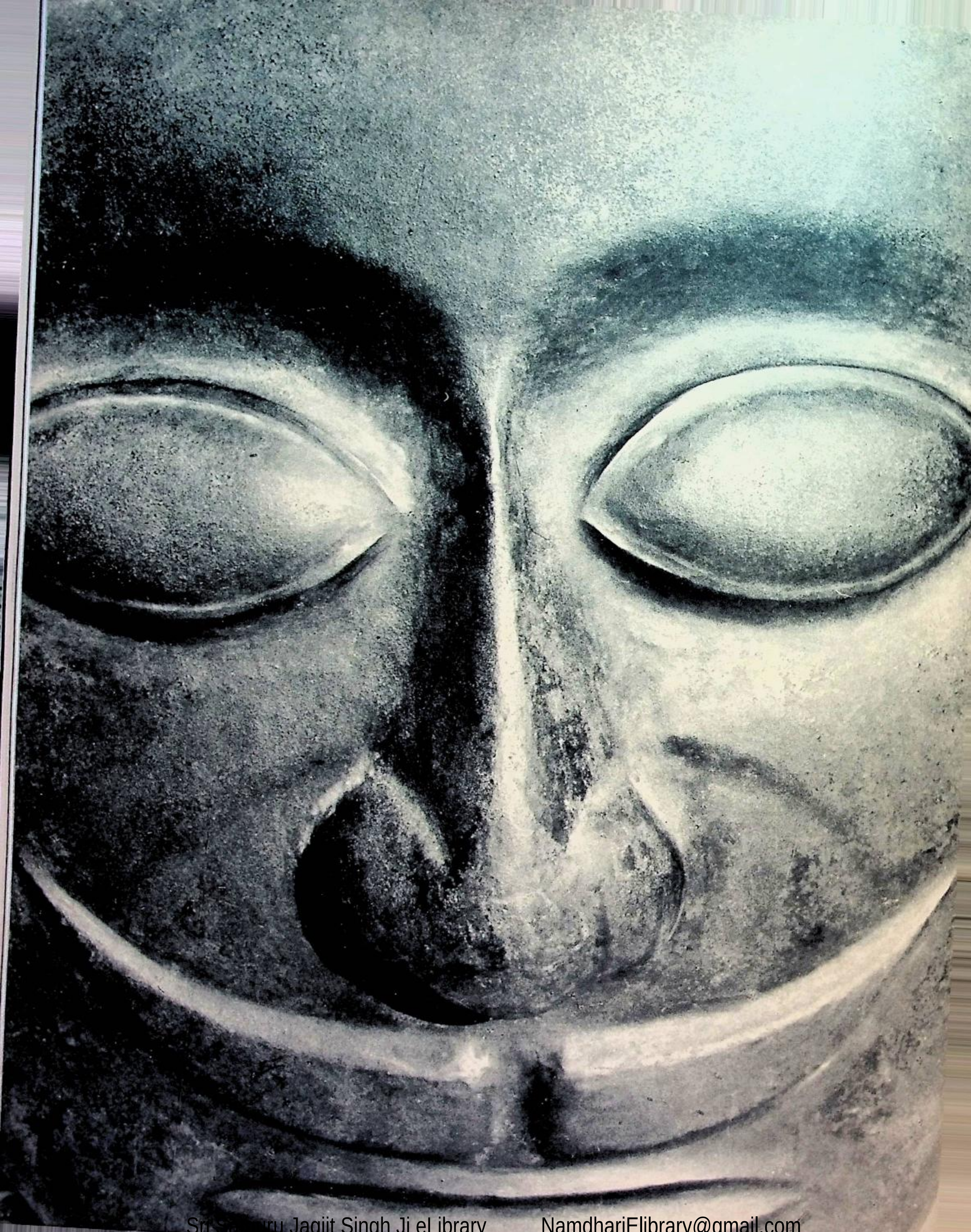
68. Three typical sketches by Kehar Singh.

Under the patronage of British officers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a school of painting, which has been named the Company school, developed in India. The centres of this type of painting were Murshidabad, Patna, Benares, Lucknow and Delhi. Photography was as yet unknown and the British officers serving in India, who wanted to convey to their friends and relatives their impressions of the people of the land, employed Indian artists to sketch odd and unusual types, including beggars, craftsmen, jugglers, and mountebanks.

In Punjab as elsewhere, after its occupation by the British (a result of the Second Sikh War in 1849), Kehar Singh, a Sikh artist, who possibly belonged to Kapurthala and also worked at Amritsar, produced a number of sketches of the contemporary scene, in the three dimensional perspective which had come from the West.

Kehar Singh was greatly attracted by beggars, minstrels, astrologers, snake-charmers and the like.

—M. S. RANDHAWA



Metalware

Metalwork has been the second largest handicraft in Amritsar. The common use of metal objects in the various aspects of daily life led to the production of a diversity of products and techniques. The metalworkers of Amritsar are as adept as the best metalworkers in any other region of the Punjab. As mentioned by Sir Denzil Ibbetson in his book, *Punjab Castes*, the metalworkers of the Punjab are mostly Hindus. They were called Thavi in the Pahari areas of the Punjab Himalayas; and in the Punjab plains they were known as Thathera. The vendors of metalware were called Kaseras. There was in Amritsar a Bazar Kaserian, near Guru-ka-bazar.

In northern India, and more especially in the Punjab, even members of higher castes—Brahmins, Khatris, Rajputs and Kanets—ply this profession.

The metalworkers of Amritsar are known for their skill in various forms of casting, soldering, methods of decoration such as repoussé, pierced work, chasing, engraving. Metal pots and utensils have long been used in most households. Metal articles have also a demand in ritualistic and temple worship in the whole of Punjab.

Decorative objects form a separate category. In this, the most remarkable are the engraved metal doors and the *kalashas* of the temples, the *chhattras* and the three-dimensional lifesize metal sculptures of the lion (Durga's *vahana*) and the bull (Siva's Nandi) at the Devi and Siva temples. In the nineteenth century, repoussé figurative low-reliefs were common in temples and gurudwaras. At times, the doors were plated with gold for repoussé work. My father worked on the silver-plated doors of the Lakshmi Narayana temple, at Durgiana, and was also commissioned to make the *Chhattra* for the Golden Temple.

Metal craftsmen engaged in repoüssé work were called "chitera" in Amritsar (in the Hill States of the Punjab Himalayas, the word "chitera" denotes a painter). The best example of repoussé, which I came across in 1958, is in a Siva temple in Bazar Bikanerian. The name of the craftsman is not known. A few of the known master metal craftsmen were Edda Agakhani, Acharja Mal, Piare Lal, Anant Ram, Haria, Harnam Dass (my father), Vasdev, better known as Vassa, Bishan Dass, popularly called Bissa, Charan Dass and Gopal Dass, Des Raj and Dewan Chand.

—K.C.A.

Woodwork

From time immemorial, wood has been widely used all over India not only for doors and windows, but also for making household objects such as utensils and furniture. Since wood is a perishable material, no specimens of early woodwork are available and one has to rely entirely on Vedic literature and the Puranas for references.

In the Punjab, it was the custom to reinforce brickwork by means of wooden beams inserted in the walls, so that the buildings were timber-framed. This beam and bracket system prevailed in the mediaeval period. These brick-and-timber walls were sloped to provide greater stability. In addition to the beams embedded horizontally within the brickwork, there were other substantial wooden elements notably doorways, with windows above and also overhanging balconies, the whole providing a very artistic wooden façade. The doorways were generally framed with fanciful and elegantly carved designs. — K.C.A.

69. *The skilful modelling of bas reliefs in silver, copper and brass remained a continuous tradition in Amritsar. Some of the most accomplished craftsmen from different parts of Northern India gathered in Bazar Kaserian, a hundred metres from the Hari Mandir, and worked for generations on gold plating and making of ritual images and utensils. This powerful mask, though of a late date, shows how purposive art remained as a vital movement in the holy city right until our time.*

70. *The shield of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with iron and brass relief work on it, shows exquisite workmanship.*



70





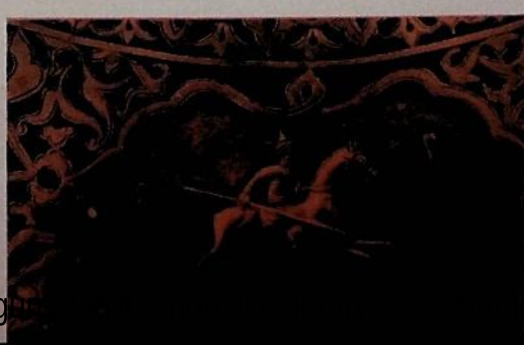








71-77. The images worked into the texture of floral design reveal the influence of Persian miniature painting, as in the Behram Gaur, with a warrior fighting the lion, the fiery dragon, the Maharaja killing the demons, the camels and wrestlers in combat. The Sikh court artisans had assimilated traditional workmanship in an effective manner.










Ivory

The craft of ivory carving was adopted in Amritsar mainly to carve lovely combs for dressing the long hair enjoined to the Sikh community by the last Guru Gobind Singh, as one of the five K's. (The other K's being Kach—shorts, Kara—bangle, Kanga—comb, Kirpan—dagger).

The master craftsmen in Bazar Mai Sewan and Darshini Deohri began to make models of the Golden Temple, images of Hindu Gods and portraits of the monarch and his nobles during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time.

The skill was passed on from father to son through rigorous training of the apprentices in this fine art, where detail is important in a carving of the precious material which, if once chipped in the wrong place or damaged in some detail, would render the expensive ivory useless.

After the British occupation, the foreigners were much impressed by the skill of the ivory carves of India. And they patronised the artisans by ordering miniature portraits of the inexalted new selves to take back home, as souvenirs for their friends and relations. Soon the profile and the three fourth face of the traditional portrait in ivory yielded to the full face and lost the old quality of characterisation in stiff realistic representation.

While the making of ivory combs is still carried on by a few craftsmen in Amritsar, the high costs of imported ivory have nearly abolished the continuity of skilled workmanship, the medium now being bone and not ivory, but mostly wood.

The ivories reproduced here are of the period when the technique of the profile—portrait was still valued. The style of these miniatures was adopted from the remnants of the Imperial court of Delhi where the art had been carried to a high degree of finish.

Footnotes: Sri Hari Mandir Sahib

1. Santokh Singh, Kavi, *Sri Guru Pratap Suraj Granth*, 1962, Vol. V, pp. 1687-88
2. Sohan Kavi, *Gurbilas Patshahi 6, 1968*, p. 22; also Santokh Singh *op. cit.*, p. 1681
3. *Amritsar District Gazetteer*, 1914, p. 13
4. Gian Singh Giani, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part I, 1970, p. 343
5. Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1689
6. Gian Singh Giani, *op. cit.*, p. 343
7. Kavi Kankan, *Das Guru Katha,* 1969, p. 19
8. Kesar Singh Chibbar, *Bansavali Nama Dasan Patshian Ka*, 1972, p. 40
9. Kesar Singh Chibbar, *op. cit.*, p. 40
10. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 305-06
11. Sarup Das Bhalla, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Santokh Singh *op. cit.*, p. 1855; Gian Singh Giani, *op. cit.*, p. 362
12. Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, 1855
13. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, 1963, p. 9
14. The first recorded reference in this regard is in *The Punjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. I, p. 141, No. 1047
15. Santokh Singh, *op. cit*, p. 1869
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1362
18. Santokh Singh, *op. cit*, pp. 1860-62
19. Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1870
20. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, 1950, p. 33
21. Latif, S. M., *History of the Panjab*, 1964, p. 253
22. Sohan Kavi, *op. cit.*, p. 89
23. *Tarikh Amritsar ke Chand Makhaz*, ed. Ganda Singh, 1958, p. 4
24. Gian Singh Giani, *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar*, Punjabi, p. 49
25. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahankosh*, 1960, p. 57

78. Portraits of royalty in ivory.

Footnotes: Survivals of Wall Paintings in Amritsar

1. W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, H.M.S.O., London, 1966, p. 18.
2. *Objects of Antiquarian Interest in Punjab and its Dependencies*, Public Works Department Press, Lahore, 1875, pp. 4-5.
3. H. H. Cole, *Preservation of National Monuments in India, Golden Temple of Amritsar*, 1884.
4. B. N. Goswamy, "Sikh Paintings: An Analysis of Some Aspects of Patronage", *Oriental Art*, Vol. XV, No. 1, p. 46.
5. Gian Singh Giani, *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar* (Urdu) 1889, p. 173.
6. Harinder Singh Roop, *Sikh te Sikhi* (Punjabi), Hind Publishers, Lahore, 1947, p. 42.
7. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton University Press, 1966, Vol. II, p. 324.
8. M. S. Randhawa, "Sikh Painting", *Roopa-Lekha*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, p. 30.
9. Harinder Singh Roop, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.
10. K. C. Aryan, *Punjab Painting*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, p. 22.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Harinder Singh Roop, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
13. K. C. Aryan, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
14. Bhan Singh, "Art of the Golden Temple", *Advance*, Vol. XI, No. 3, 1964, p. 46.
15. Harinder Singh Roop, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
16. K. C. Aryan, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
17. This information was given to me by Atma Singh, an Amritsar painter employed in renovating paintings of Baba Atal in 1971.
18. *Ibid.*
19. K. C. Aryan, "Some Punjabi Artists", *Roopa-Lekha*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, p. 34.

Footnotes: Gurudwara Baba Atal Sahib

1. William Crooke, *The North-Western Province of India*, Methuen, 1897, p. 192.
2. *Amritsar District Gazetteer* 1892-93, p. 157; Gian Singh Giani, *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar*, 1889, p. 147.
3. 1628 A.D., according to *Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Punjab and its Dependencies*, Public Works Department Press, Lahore, 1875, pp. 2-3.
   1798 A.D., in *Amritsar District Gazetteer*, 1892-93, p. 157.
   According to Gian Singh Giani, *op. cit.* pp. 147-8, the first three storeys were built in V. S. 1807 (1750 A.D.). The foundation was laid in VS. 1835 (1776 A.D.).
   Kahn Singh Nabha, *The Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature*, Language Department (Punjab), Patiala, 1960, p. 37.
4. Michael Edwardes, *Indian Temples and Palaces*, Paul Hamlyn, 1969, p. 147.
5. This information was received from S. Atma Singh.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PHOTOS: Daljit Singh and Satwant Singh: Figs. 3, 18, 19, 22-27, 33, 48.
Kanwarjit Kang: Figs. 40-43, 45-47, 50-52.
K. C. Aryan: Figs. 66, 67.
Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh Collection: Figs. 53-60, 68.
Victoria and Albert Museum Collection: Figs. 44a, 61-65.
Amritsar Museum Collection, Rambagh Palace, Amritsar: Fig. 78.
D. H. Sahiar: Figs. 16, 17, 20, 21, 28-32, 34-39, 44, 49, 53-60, 69-78.
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Sketches by Badri Narayan.

Chronology of Amritsar Incorporating Culture Chart

Foundations & Buildings

1577-1600

1577: Guru Ram Das excavated the Holy Tank.

1588: Guru Arjan Dev founded Santokh Sar. Muslim divine, Mian Mir of Lahore laid the foundation stone of Hari Mandir, in the presence of Guru Arjan Dev.

1601-1630

1601: Hari Mandir completed.

1602-03: Guru Arjan Dev founded Ram Sar.

1604: Guru Arjan Dev enshrined the Adi Granth, compiled by him, in Hari Mandir.

1607: Guru Hargobind founded Akal Takht; also constructed Akal Sar, Bibek Sar and Kaul Sar and a small fort, where now stands Gurudwara Lohgarh. Guru Hargobind declared from Akal Takht that he would henceforth wear two swords: one of Miri and the other of Piri; i.e., temporal leadership and spiritual leadership in Sufi terminology.

1628: Guru Hargobind defended Amritsar against the Mughals, but had to retreat.

1701-1800

1750: In mid eighteenth century, Sikhs built mud fort, Ram Rauni, later called Ramgarh. Three storeys of Baba Atal were raised.
Thakurdwara of Raghunath Das built.

1756-57: Hari Mandir destroyed by Afghan invaders.

1759: *Akhara* Ghumand Das founded.

1762: Hari Mandir blown up during the sixth Afghan invasion led by Ahmad Shah Abdali.

1764: Rebuilding of Hari Mandir commenced. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia founded Katra Ahluwalia.

1766-72: Jhanda Singh Bhangi built a brick fort.

1774: Ground floor of Akal Takht reconstructed.

1775: Mahant Bala Nand founded his *Akhara*.

1776: Reconstruction of Hari Mandir causeway and Darshani Deorhi.

1778-94: Baba Atal completed.

1781-91: Udasi saints, Pritam Das and Santokh Das constructed Hansali canal, feeding holy tank.

1783: Jaimal Singh's Katra founded.

1784: Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's *samadhi* built near Baba Atal.

1786: Mahant Pritam Das founded *Akhara* Sangalwala.

1795: Udet Narain founded *Akhara* Kashiwala.

1750-95: Many *bungas* built.

1801-1810

1802: Maharaja Ranjit Singh repaired Hari Mandir and donated Rupees 5,00,000 for gold plating.

1805: Mahant Mangani founded *Akhara* Prag Das. Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Hukam Singh Chimini donated gold to the Hari Mandir shrine. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered Govindgarh fort to be built.

1808: Royal physicians Hakim Nur-ud-Din and Aziz-ud-Din founded Katra Hakiman and built *Haveli* Fakirkhana.
Many *akharas* and *bungas* were built during the decade. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia built two lofty minarets near *Akhara* Bramh Buta.

1811-1820

1818: Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a Summer Palace in Ram Bagh Gardens, on an area of 84 acres, after removal of the mud fort of Bhangi Sardars.
The palace with *jal baradari* was constructed under the guidance of Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, Desa Singh and Lehna Singh.
Some more *bungas* built.

1821-1830

1822: Maharaja Ranjit Singh got built a boundary wall around the city, with 12 gates, under a plan prepared by Mistri Mohammad Yousef.

1823: Ganda Singh Peshawari donated money to embellish ceiling of Golden Temple. Jetha Singh Majithia installed a new Nishan Sahib at Golden Temple on iron post replacing wooden post.
Gardens of Misr Beli Ram, Prince Kharak Singh, Tara Singh, Jwala Singh, Desa Singh, Khushal Singh and Gurmukh Singh Giani laid around Ram Bagh.

1831-1840 Maharaja Ranjit Singh initiated the marble floor for *parkarma* or circumambulation of Golden Temple, from Darshani Deorhi to Bunga Ahluwalia (remaining portion of floor completed by Raja Ranbir Singh of Jind, and Lehna Singh Majithia).

1835: Desa Singh Majithia inaugurated Shivala Misr Vir Bhan as a shrine and charitable school for Sanskrit studies. Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered enamel and filigree work inlay on marble for the walls of Golden Temple.

1841-1850

1843: Maharaja Sher Singh initiated *Kar Sewa* or cleaning the holy tank, but died before completion of work.

1849: After the British
Sikh kingdom,
Golden Temple
Giani Gurbaksh S

1850: A purdah bathing
was built, near Du
out of Golden Ten
During this perio
Singh installed a
place of one donat
Majithia, which
storm. Maharaja
a purdah bathing
near *elechi ber*,
Deorhi.

1851-1860

1852: The *Haveli* of Sad
law of Maharaj
demolished and a
the Amritsar Dis
structed on the sit
annum was sanctio
revenues for the sc

1853: Church of St. Paul
Mission, under pat
Commissioner Mr.

1858-59: Orphanage built at
then removed to
Charkabad). Deput
Mr. Fredric Coop
stones slabs from
Guru-ka-Bagh near
leper asylum was
Mr. Cooper.

1861-1870

1861: Upper Bari Doab ca

1862: Mission Church was
donations, near R
Kotumal Khatri do
a well at Guru-ka-B

1866: Midwifery school op

1868: Construction of a
Gothic style at
Rupees 50,000, unde
Mr. John Gord
Engineer.

1870: Christian Vernacul
Society built schools
teachers.

1871-1880

1874: Clock Tower complet

1875: Secretary, Municipa
Mr. E. Nichol had m
filled in. He also
municipal technical
out Qaisar-i-Bagh
garden, now known
Kishan Park. Darya
Thakurdwara in Katr

1876: Hall Gate built and n
Deputy Commissioner

1877: Alexandra High Scho

1879: Temple of Maiya N
Doolo.

1880: Masjid Jan Moham
Hall Bazar. The f
was buried near the m

xation of the
ole work in
tinued under
.
ce for women
Bhanjani Beri,
funds.
Maharaja Sher
iron post in
y Lehna Singh
fallen in a
r Singh built
ce for women,
the Darshani

aur, mother-in-
Ranjit Singh,
olice Post and
t School con-
Rs. 5,000 per
l from Imperial
ol.
ilt by Amritsar
age of Deputy
unders.
Amritsar (since
nristian village
Commissioner,
donated red
Ram Bagh to
Baba Atal. A
sponsored by

al constructed.
erected through
n Bagh Gate.
ated funds for
gh.
ned.
clock tower in
a cost of
r supervision of
on, Executive

r Educational
for training of

ted.
al Committee,
oats around city
established a
school and laid
and another
as Seth Radha
ana Mal built
ra Mohar Singh.
named after the
er, C. H. Hall.
ol built.
Nath, in Katra

mmad built at
founder's body
mosque.

1881-1890

1882: Replica of one side of the large gate of Golden Temple sent to South Kensington Museum, London.

1885: Sheikh Khair-ud-Din, Muslim merchant, built mosque named after him at Hall Bazar. Marble tomb built for him after his death.

1888: Pandit Bisheswar Prasad built a three-storey gate at *Akhara* Bala Nand.

1889: Home for leper children.

1890: Committee for establishing Khalsa College formed.
During this period, work on the pavement around Holy Tank remained in progress.

1891-1900

1891: Foundation of new Civil Hospital laid. Brass plate, embossed with figures, presented to Baba Atal shrine by Shankar Das Bagga of Peshawar. Foundation of Khalsa College.

1892: Pandit Baijnath started school near Town Hall.

1894: Brass plate, embossed with figures, presented to Baba Atal by Kesar Dai, wife of Hari Singh of Kila Bhangian.

1901-1910

1902: Saragarhi Memorial, in the form of a gurudwara, opened by Sir W. M. Young, Lt.-Governor of Punjab, in memory of twenty-one soldiers of 36th Sikh Regiment killed defending British-held Saragarhi fort in North-Western Frontier.

1903-04: Municipal Committee Waterworks and Victoria Jubliee Hospital commenced.

1905: One storey of each of the two minarets of Bunga Ramgarhia fell down during earthquake.

1909-10: Lala Devi Dayal built Sri Satya Narainji shrine.

1911-1920

1914: Dhani Ram Chatrik started standard type foundry for Gurmukhi script. Electric supply plant commissioned.

1917: Teka Devi Handicrafts School for Girls established.

1918: Foundation stone of Arya Samaj Mandir laid by Swami Sardanand.

1919: Part of Hansali canal feeding sacred tank covered and made *pucca* through initiatives of Sant Gurmukh Singh and Sant Sadhu Singh.
First power-loom factory, called Bharat Udhar Weaving Factory, set up.

1920: Medical School (later Medical College) and Central Weaving Institute founded.

1921-1930

1921: Durgiana Temple founded, through joint efforts of Lala Nathu Mal and Gursahai Mal.

1923: *Kar Sewa* carried out.

1924: Oriental Carpet Manufacturing Company founded.

1926: Hindu Sabha College established.

1928-29: Installation of stone slabs on the walls of the Golden Temple led to the loss of some murals.

1931-1940

1931: Present building of Arya Samaj Mandir at Lohgarh, founded by Mahatma Hans Raj.
Foundation stone of 132-room Sarai Guru Ram Das laid by Sant Sadhu Singh of Patiala.

1934: First machine embroidery factory established by an Italian entrepreneur.

1935: Home for the Blind, under the patronage of Bhai Vir Singh.

1938: Present Arya Samaj Mandir, at Lawrence Road, founded by Mahatma Narainswami.
Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Summer Palace renovated under the direction of Sir Gopaldas Bhandari, President Municipal Committee.

1941-1950

1944: Homeopathic Hospital founded by Chief Khalsa Diwan.

1947: Hathi Gate, Katra Karam Singh, Kucha Beli Ram, Chowk Farid, Tunda Talab, Katra Sher Singh, Bazar Kakarwana and Hall Bazar burnt down in partition riots. Tomb of Sheikh Khair-ud-din levelled to the ground. Pandit Nehru bemoaned: "Amritsar looked like a bomb-scarred city".

1948: Pingalwara founded by Bhagat Puran Singh.

1951-1960

1951: Vedanta Niketan of Nirmal Swami founded. It holds annual Vedanta conferences.

1956: Padam Bhandari Bridge opened by Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon on February 3, in memory of P.C. Bhandari, Municipal Executive Officer, who rebuilt Amritsar shattered through partition riots.

1958: Central Sikh Mus
July 11.

1960: Statue of Mahatma
by Amarnath Seh
Dr. S. Radhakrish
on October 2.

1961-1970

1961: Dr. Rajendra Pras
stone of main b
Academy of Fine
Singh School of A

1965: Statue of Netaji
Bose installed on Ja
Bus Stand complet

1969: Construction of
Hall started. Fou
Guru Nanak De
by President V. V
ber 23.

1971-1975

1972: Summer Palace of
Singh declared pro
and a museum set u
Statue of Majo
Bhatia, Vir Chak
stalled at Rambagh

1973: *Kar Sewa* initiate
Singh.

1974: Construction of L
Ram Das started
130 million rupees.

1975: Youth Hostel opene
Bhai Gurdas library
Nanak Dev Univers

Dates	Gurus/Rulers	Cultural Personalities	Art/Achievements
1574-1581	Guru Ram Das *Punjab was under the rule of Akbar 1556-1605*	Sunder	Punjabi poetry
		Ram Das, Guru, (1534-1591)	Religious poetry in Punjabi
		Bhai Gurdas (1558-1637)	40 *Varan* and 556 *Kabit* in Punjabi. The *Adi Granth* was scribed by him.
1581-1606	Guru Arjan Dev	Arjan Dev, Guru, (1563-1606)	Religious poetry in Punjabi. He compiled the *Adi Granth* in 1604.
		Pilu	Punjabi poetry
		Jallhan Bhagat (1586-1644)	Punjabi poetry
1606-1645	Guru Hargobind *Punjab was under the rule of Jehangir (1605-1627) and Shahjahan (1627-1658)*	Bhai Abdulla Bhai Nathwal Bhai Babak	They performed *kirtan* at Akal Takht.
1645-1661	Guru Har Rai	Bhai Ram Kuir	Punjabi poetry
1661-1664	Guru Harkrishan *Punjab was under the rule of Aurangzeb, (1658-1707)* *After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Punjab remained under several rulers and Governors of Lahore, beginning with Abdul Samad Khan.*	Bhai Mani Singh	He wrote a commentary on the compositions of Bhai Gurdas (1st chapter – *Gian Ratnawali* and 11th chapter – *Bhagat Ratnawali*).
1739-1745	*Zakaria Khan, Subedar* of Lahore (A civil war followed Zakaria Khan's death)		
1748-1753	Mir Mannu *Subedar* of Lahore		
1757-1758	Sardar Jahan Khan, *Subedar* of Lahore		
1758	Adina Khan appointed *Subedar* of Lahore by the Marathas		
1768 onwards	After the final departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali from Punjab, Sikh Misls became powerful. Amritsar remained a sort of independent town because Misl chiefs exercised their control in their own principalities or *katras*. Before Maharaja Ranjit Singh's acquisition of the city of Amritsar in 1802-03, it had a federal Sikh government.	Hasham Shah (1735-1843)	He was the first poet to write *Kissa Sassi Punnu* and *Shirin Farhad* in Punjabi.
		Bhai Surat Singh	Theologist
		Mahant Bala Nand	Sanskrit scholar
		Mohan Das Niranjini	Hindi poetry
		Rattan Hari	Hindi poetry (in praise of Rama)
1802-1839	Maharaja Ranjit Singh	Muhammad Yar Khan	Architect and craftsman
		Giani Sant Singh	Hindi Poetry
(1800-1810)		Sondha (1750-1839)	Punjabi poetry

Dates	G
(1811-1820)	
(1821-1830)	
(1831-1840)	
1839-1840	
1841-1843	
1843-1849	
1849-1947	
(1851-1860)	
1859	
1860	
1865	
(1861-1870)	
1870	
1871	
(1871-1880)	

urus/Rulers	Cultural Personalities	Art/Achievements
	Shah Muhammad (1789-1862)	Punjabi poetry
	Bhai Mansa Singh	He performed *kirtan* at the Golden Temple.
	Bhai Sant Singh Giani (d. 1832)	He translated Tulsi Ramayana in his *Prakashni Granth*. He also wrote on Guru Gobind Singh and on Amritsar.
	Sada Singh	Painter
	Ganeshi Das	Architect and construction officer of Ranjit Singh.
	Mohammad Yousef	Architect and *Mistri*
	Megh Singh (b. 1802)	Poet and painter
	Ram Singh	Painter
	Deva Singh	Painter
	Tara Singh Kavishar (1808-1878)	Hindi poetry
Iaharaja Ranjit Singh lied on June 27, 1839)		
Iaharaja Kharak Singh lied Nov. 5, 1840)		
Iaharaja Sher Singh ıssassinated on ept. 15, 1843)	Rattan Hari	Hindi poetry
	Kehar Singh	Painter, believed to have worked in the Golden Temple.
Iaharaja Dalip Singh		
	Hasham Shah Mukhlis (1820-1895)	Punjabi poetry
unjab annexed by ıe British in 1849.		
ritish Rule		
	Mahi Kambo (1820-1908)	Punjabi poetry
	Mian Karam Bux.	Architect, constructed several Hindu temples in Amritsar.
	Lal Singh	Painter
ir John Lawrence Lt. Governor)	Swami Lalji Das	Hindi poetry
ir Robert Montgomery Lt. Governor)		
	Partap Singh (1834-1867)	Hindi poetry
	Muhammad Sadik (1834-1909)	Punjabi poetry
	Ganga Ram (1835-1907)	Punjabi poetry
	Kishan Singh Aarif (1836-1904)	Punjabi poetry
	Bishan Singh	Painter, participated in the Lahore exhibition of 1864 and his work was commended. He also worked in the Golden Temple.
ir Donald McLeod Lt. Governor)		
	Karm Singh	Craftsman and wood-carver
	Gulam Rasul (1842-1903)	Punjabi poetry
ir Henry Durand Lt. Governor)		
ir Henry Davies Lt. Governor)		
	Mahant Ishar Singh	Painter
	Arjan Singh Kundan Firosh (1844-1909)	Hindi poetry

Dates	Gurus/Rulers	Cultural P
		Bhai Jawala S
		Malawa Ram (1849-1918)
		Din Mohamm (1850-1902)
		Pandit Hazara
		Dr. Charan Si (1853-1908)
1877	Sir Robert Egerton (Lt. Governor)	(*Note:* While S got his book, A
		Nihal Singh
		Jawahar Singh
		(*Note*: In 188 belonging to A Habibulla, Yu Singh.)
1882	Sir Charles Aitchison (Lt. Governor)	
(1881-1890)		Babu Karmdin (1853-1959)
		Santokh Singh (1859-1894)
		Narain Das (1
		Sardar Khan E (1863-1894)
		Shankar Das S (1864-1917)
		Jaimal Singh
		Ram Singh
1887	Sir James Lyall (Lt. Governor)	Bhai Sham Sin
1892	Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick (Lt. Governor)	
(1891-1900)		Udham Singh S
		Miran Bux Jan (1870-1906)
		Malla Ram
		Kesar Singh Jal
		Maulvi Habib U (1871-1954)
		Bhagat Devi Da
		Sardool Singh
1897	W. M. Young (Lt. Governor)	
(1901-1910)		Mehtab Singh
		Ganda Singh
		Bhai Vir Singh
1902	Sir Charles Montgomery (Lt. Governor)	
		Hakim Gulam J
		Hafiz Muhamm

...onalities	Art/Achievements
h	Painter
'far	Punjabi poetry
Jan	Punjabi poetry
im	Punjabi poetry
	Hindi poetry
ami Dayanand was in Amritsar in August 1877, he odesh Rattan Mala, published at Amritsar.)	
	Painter
	Painter
W. G. Leitner noted down eight names of authors ritsar—Hazara Singh, Dr. Sahibditta, Anwar Shah, s Singh, Gulam Ali, Babu John Hari, S. Thakur	
	Punjabi poetry
'akhhari	Hindi Poetry
52-1911)	Hindi Poetry
rq	Punjabi poetry
ankar	Punjabi poetry
	Painter
	Architect and Painter. He executed the plan of Khalsa College, Amritsar and in part the plan of Buckingham Palace, London, and later became Principal of Mayo School of Art, Lahore.
h	*Kirtaniya*
ardar	Urdu poetry
isar	Punjabi and Urdu poetry
	Painter
angir	Urdu poetry
llah	Punjabi poetry
is	Punjabi poetry
	Painter
	Painter
	Painter
(1872-1947)	Punjabi poetry and novels. Edited—*Suraj Parkash*, *Sikhan di Bhagat Mala*, *Puratan Janam Sakhi*.
Jilani	Several books on *hikmat* in Urdu
addin Dardi	Punjab[illegible]

Dates	Gurus/Rulers	Cultural Personalities	Art/Achievem...
		Alla Ditta Shifta (1873-1908)	Punjabi poetry
		Kharg Singh (1873-1953)	Hindi poetry
		Abdul Kadir Danishmand (1874-1935)	Punjabi poetry
		Karmdin Muntizar (1875-1912)	Punjabi poetry with
		Pal Singh Aarif	Punjabi poetry
		Giani Jodh Singh (1876-1937)	Punjabi poetry. He the *Mahabharata* a into Punjabi.
		Dhani Ram Chatrik (1876-1954)	Punjabi poetry
		Molla Bakhsh Kushta (1876-1955)	Punjabi and Urdu p
(1911-1920)		Jagat Singh Sewak (1876-1945)	Punjabi poetry
		Muhammad Din Sokhta (1876-1944)	Punjabi poetry
		Muhammad Hayat (1876-1933)	Punjabi poetry
		Sir Joginder Singh (1877-1946)	Author in English
1913	Michael O'Dyer (Lt. Governor)	Mahant Ganesha Das	Punjabi poetry
		Sobha Ram Sharf (1879-1933)	Punjabi poetry
		Suraj Singh Updeshak	Punjabi poetry
		Gian Singh (1883-1953)	Painter
		Teja Singh (1883-1958)	He wrote several b mostly pertaining t history. His importa *Guru Gobind Singh* *Nanak and his Mis* *Religion.*
1919	Sir Edward Maclagan (Lt. Governor)		
1921	Sir Edward Maclagan appointed first Governor of Punjab		
		Muhammad Din Garib (1884-1931)	Punjabi poetry
		Karm Singh (1884-1930)	Historian
		Muhammad Bakhsh Farshi (1892-1936)	Punjabi poetry
(1921-1930)		Sudhashan Dev Sharma	*Var Vadhu Vivecha* dealing with Amrit
		Giani Pindi Das	Wrote tracts in Hin *Andolan Me Mahan*
		S. S. Charan Singh Shahid (1893-1935)	Punjabi poetry (mo and prose; wrote th in Punjabi.
		Hari Singh (1894-1970)	Painter
		Devi Das Hindi (1894-1945)	Punjabi and Urdu
		Abdul Rahim Ajiz (1896-1953)	Punjabi poetry
		Gurbaksh Singh Shamsher	Wrote a history of
		Guran Ditta Khanna (b.1897)	Punjabi poetry
		Brahm Nath Datta Qasir	Urdu poetry and fi

ts	Dates	Gurus/Rulers	Cultural Personalities	Art/Achievements
			Thakur Singh (1899-1976)	Painter
umorous tinge			Karm Chand Guglani Guru Prasad Pathak Ganesh Das Paras Goswamin Nand Kishore Babu Gurmukh Rai	They all wrote tracts in Hindi defending either Sanatan Dharm or Arya Samaj.
	(1931-1940)		Muhammad Ismail Isa (1899-1947)	Punjabi poetry
anslated l the *Ramayana*			Ilamdin Khaksar	Punjabi poetry
			Muhammad Husain Arshi	Urdu poetry
			Hari Singh Talib	Translated *Rubaiat-i-Khayam* into Punjabi.
			Atma Singh	Painter
etry			Kirpa Ram Nazim (d. 1958)	Punjabi poetry
			Dharm Singh	Architect,
			Mahasha Dev Parkash	He translated *Kuran Sharif* into *Hindi.*
			Sufi Tabassam	Punjabi and Urdu poetry
			Firoz-ud-Din-Tughari	Urdu poetry (also writes in Persian), *Kulliat-i-Firoz* is his important work.
	(1941-1950)		Puran Singh Hunar	Urdu poetry—
			Dr. Mulk Raj Anand	Art critic, historian and novelist in English. He also writes prose poems.
			Khushwant Singh	Author and editor in English; wrote the monumental *History of the Sikhs.*
			Sundar Das Zar	Punjabi poetry—
oks in English Sikh religion and nt works are: *'s Mission, Guru* *ion, Sword and*			Nafees Khalili	Wrote Ramayana as Urdu poetry
			Harinder Singh Roop	Punjabi prose and poetry .
			S. S. Amol	Over fifty books in Punjabi.
			Uttam Singh Tej	Punjabi poetry
	August 15, 1947	India gains Independence	Ishwar Chitarkar	Painter and poet
			Bawa Balwant	Punjabi poetry—
			Saadat Hassan Minto	Urdu author
			Swami Harisharnanand	Several books on Ayurveda
			Surinder Singh Narula	Punjabi novelist
			Pritam Das Nirmal	Author of *Udasin Samparday*
	(1960-1970)		Gurdial Singh Phul	Punjabi playwright
			Ahmad Rahi	Urdu and Punjabi poetry
			Mohan Rakesh	Hindi playwright
n, a book in Hindi sar prostitutes			Gurcharn Singh Jasuja	Punjabi playwright
di; *Swantarta* *ishi Daya Nand.*			Amar Chitarkar	Punjabi poet and painter
			Chander Dhar Sharma Guleri	Hindi short story writer
			Dwarka Das Utsak	Hindi poetry
stly humorous) e first short story			Dwarka Dhish Mehar	Artist and poet
			Phula Rani	Artist
			N. S. Tasneem	Novelist—Urdu and Punjabi
poetry			Sarwan Kumar Verma	Urdu poet and short story writer, Advocate by profession.
			Hira Nand Soz	Urdu poet and short story writer
Punjabi journalism			Dr. Kulbir Singh Kaang	Critic
			Mohanjit	Punjabi poetry
ction			Ajaib Hundal	Punjabi poet

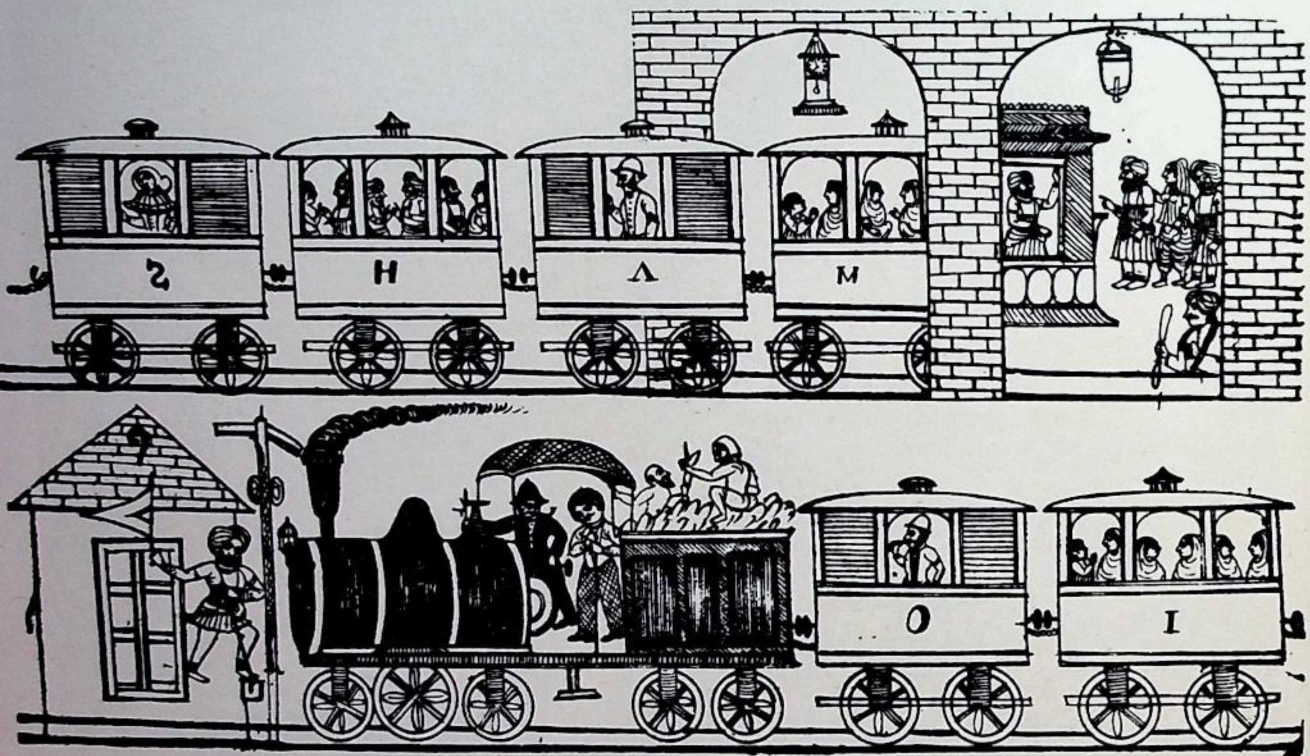
—Kanwarjit Kang



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(1931-1940)		Muhammad Ismail Isa (1899-1947)	Punjabi poetry
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		Saadat Hassan Minto	Urdu author
		Swami Harisharnanand	Several books on Ayurveda
		Surinder Singh Narula	Punjabi novelist
		Pritam Das Nirmal	Author of *Udasin Samparday*

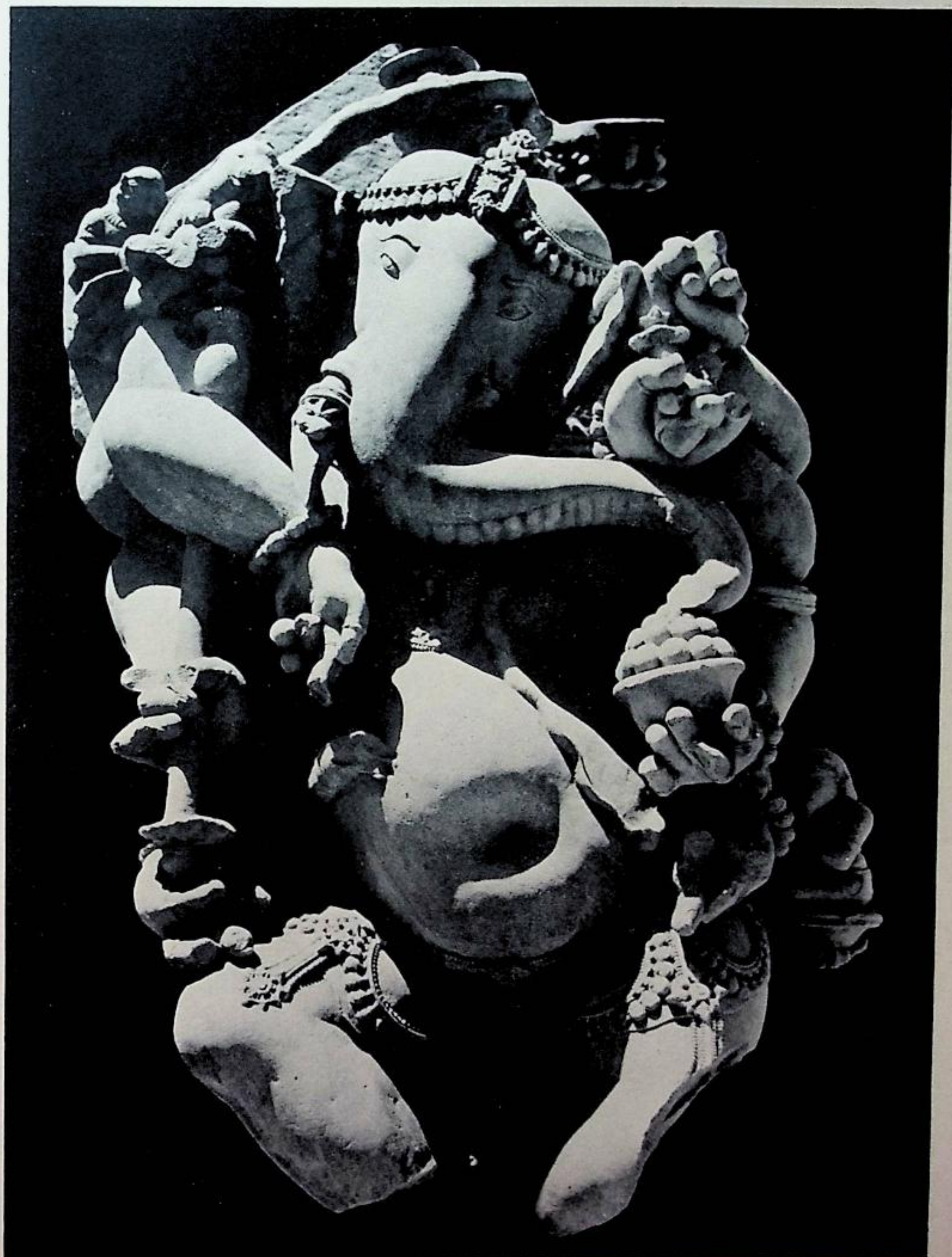
—Kanwarjit Kang

In 1859–
the first train for the Sikhs . . .

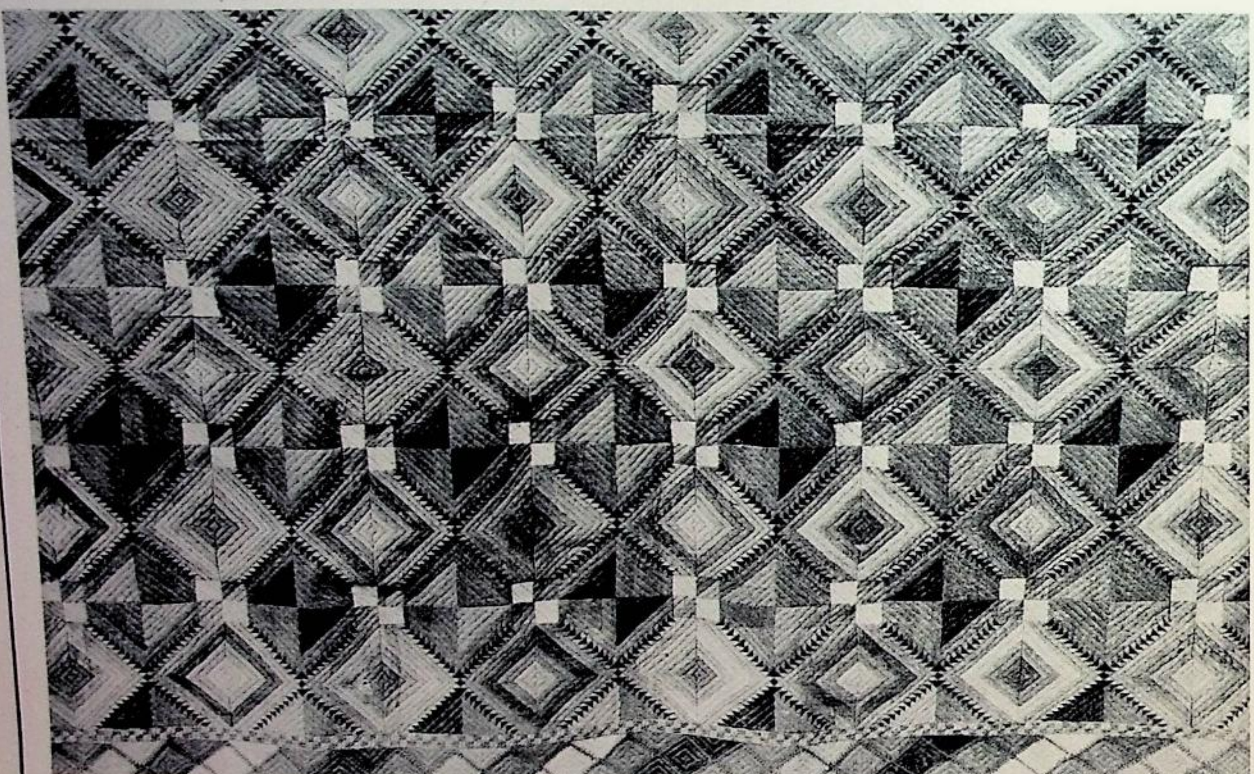


In 1977–
the "Pink City Express" to Jaipur,
the fastest metre gauge train in the world

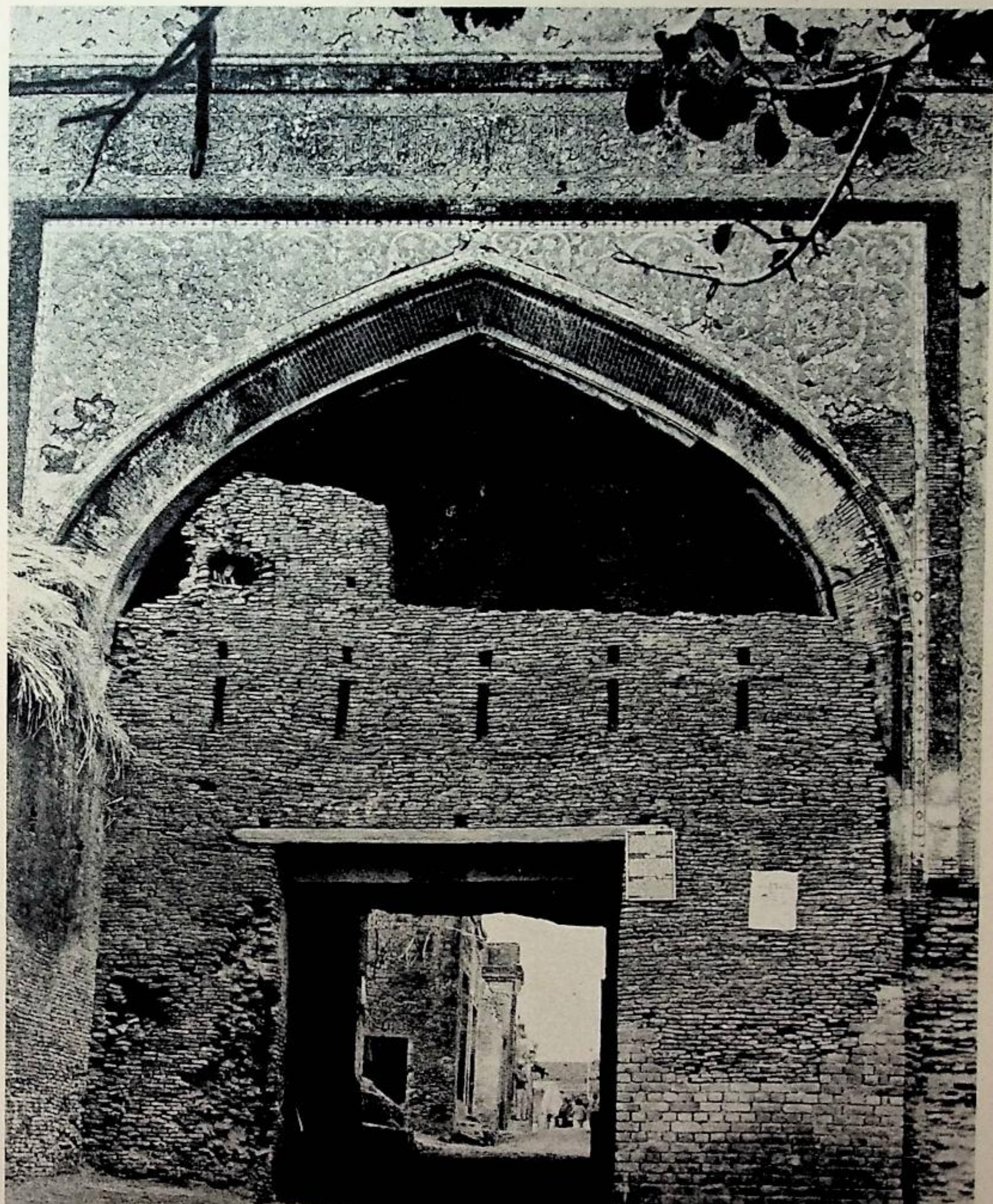
WESTERN RAILWAY



The God of plenty



Traditional Phulkari for the bride . . .



Lime then, cement today



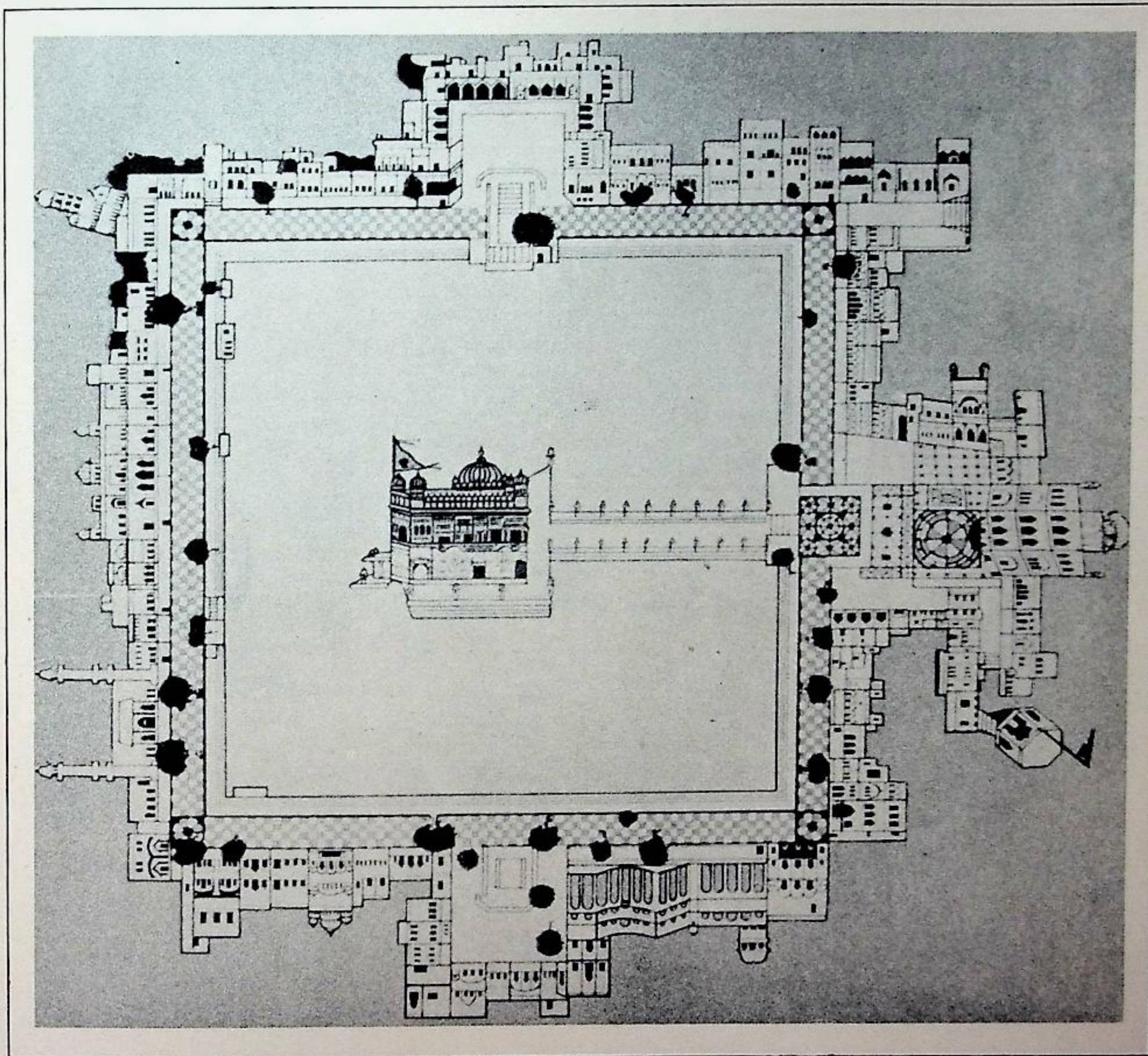
Lovers in the luxury of a terrace garden





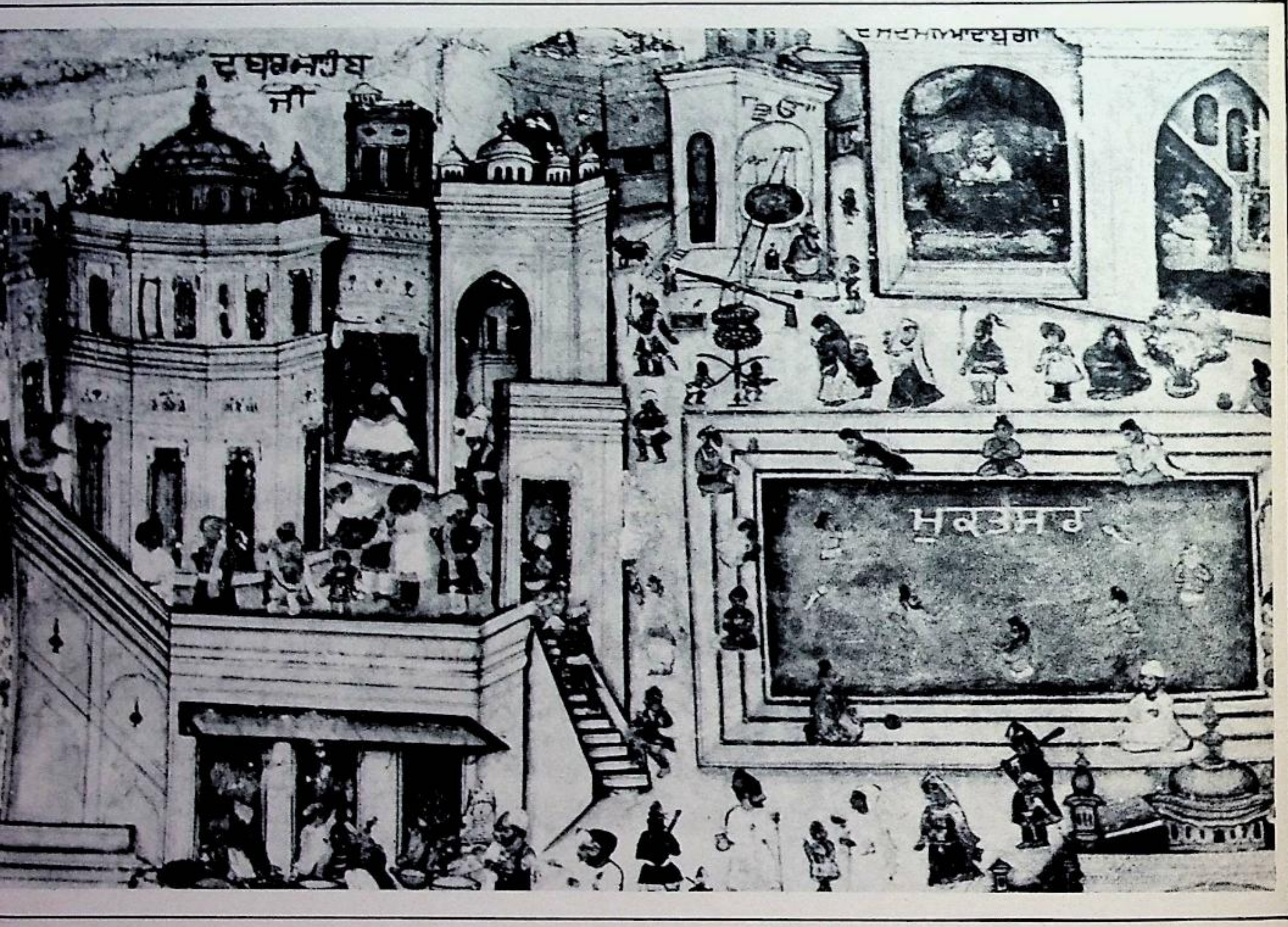
"Tiger tiger burning bright . . ."

TATA STEEL



Ancient Blue Print of the Golden Temple

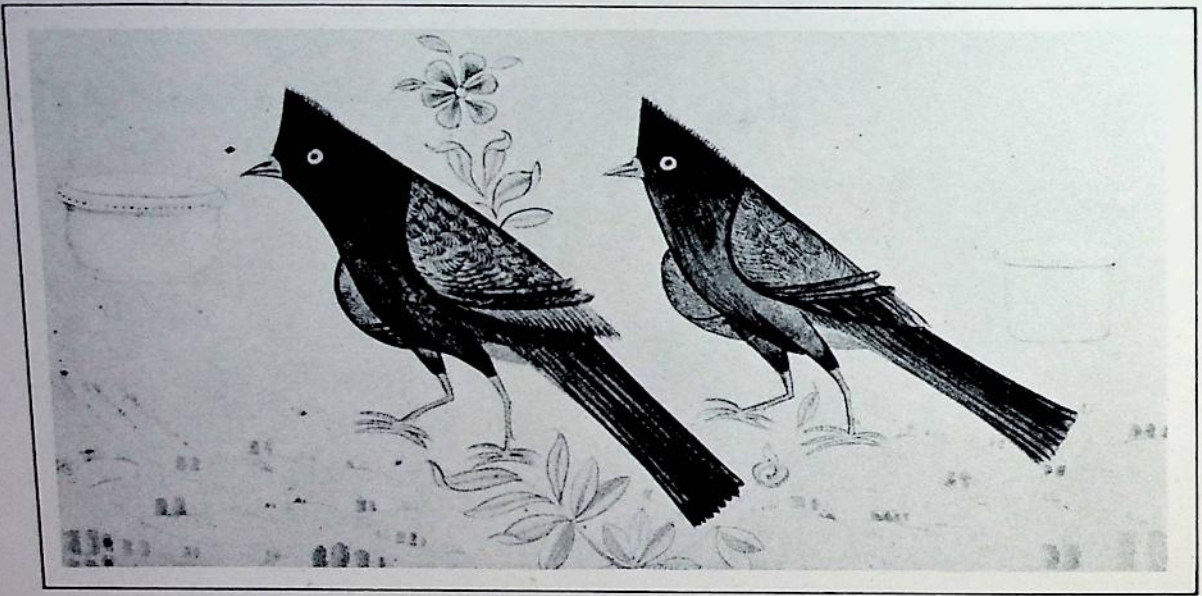
TATA CONSULTING ENGINEERS



Cities grew with trade and industries



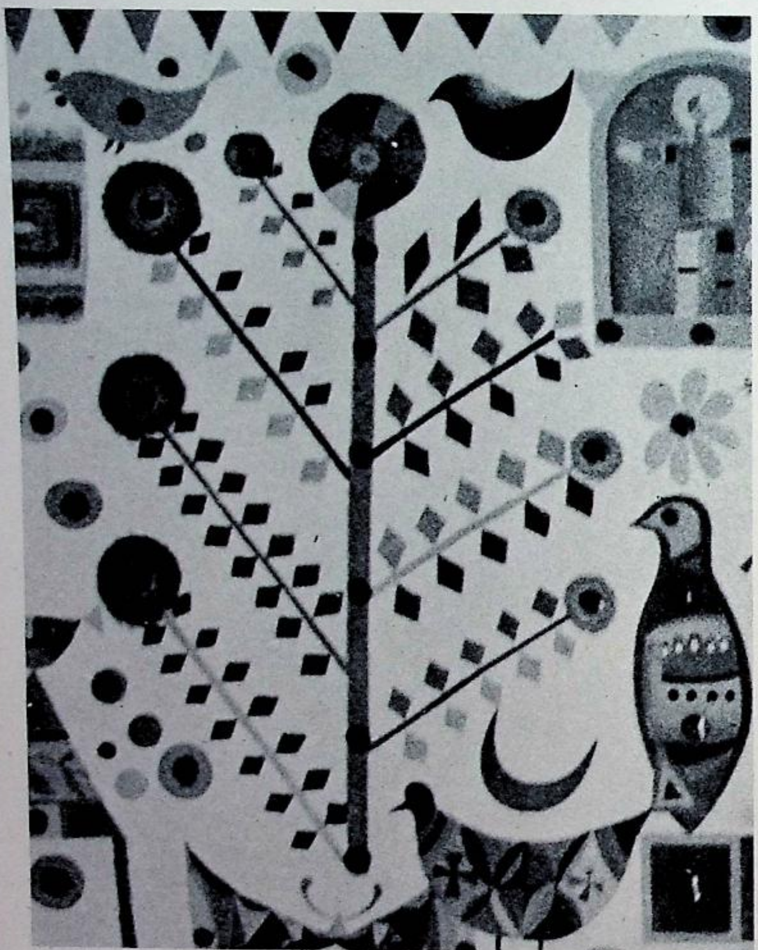
Spinner's Craft



Ready to Fly:
a page from an illustrated gurmukhi manuscript



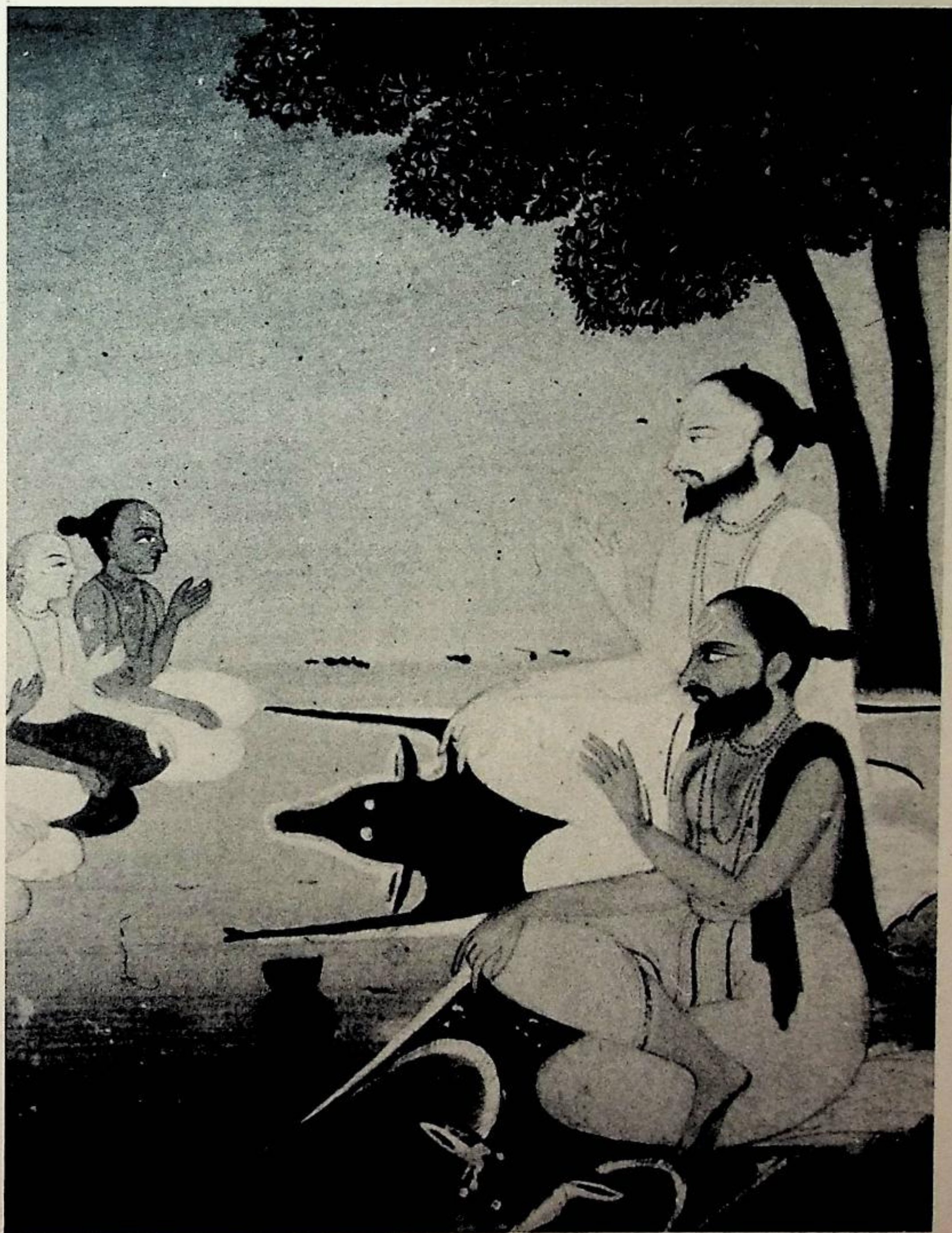
Draped in a shawl



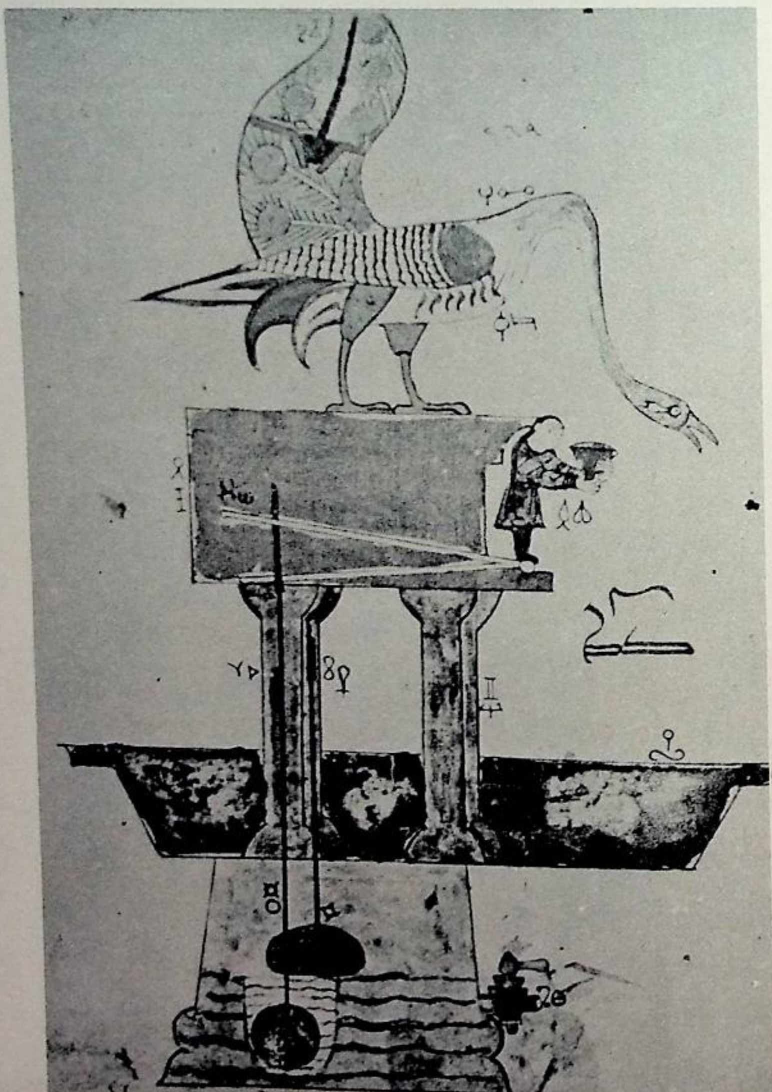
"Tree of Life" detail from a Mural



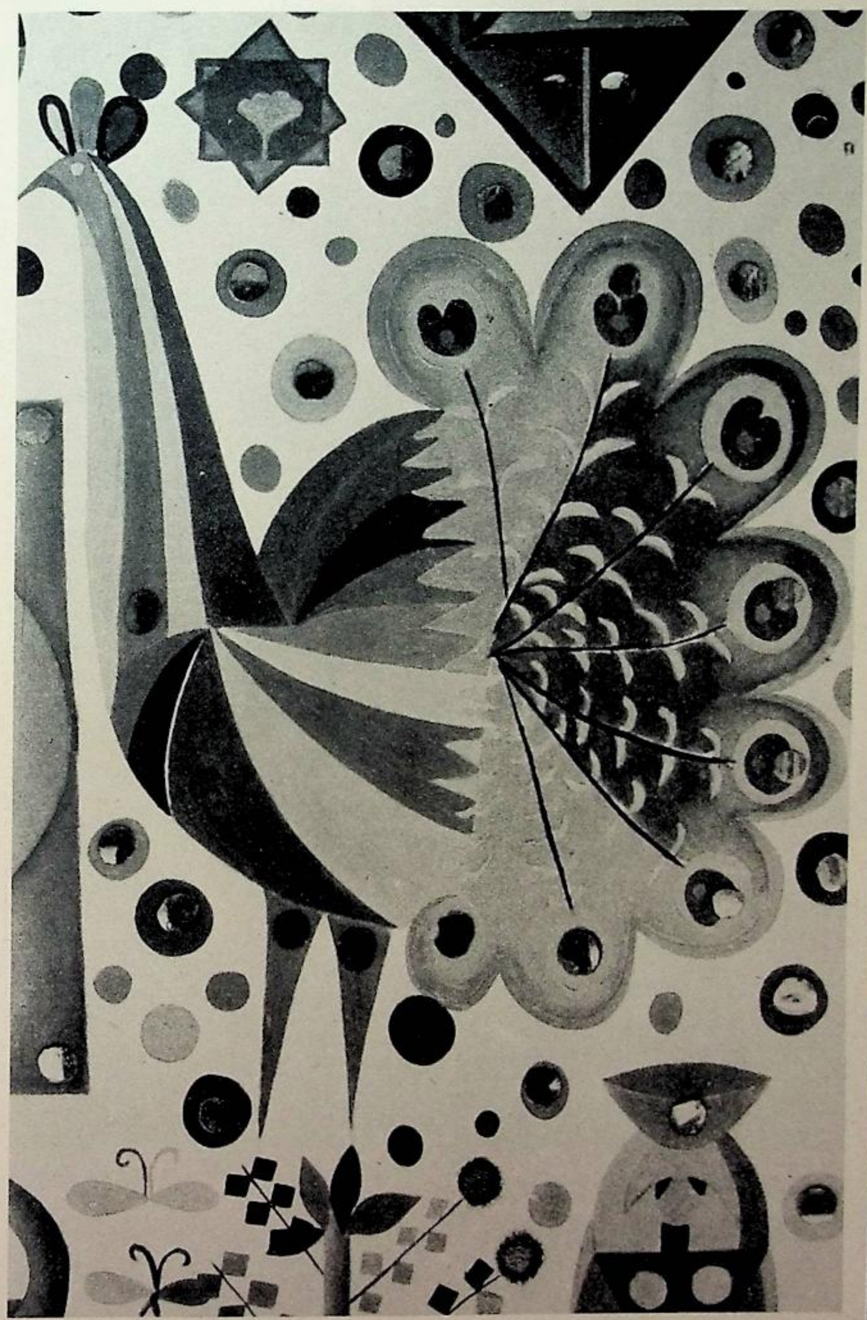
Colour, form and rhythm in every texture . . .



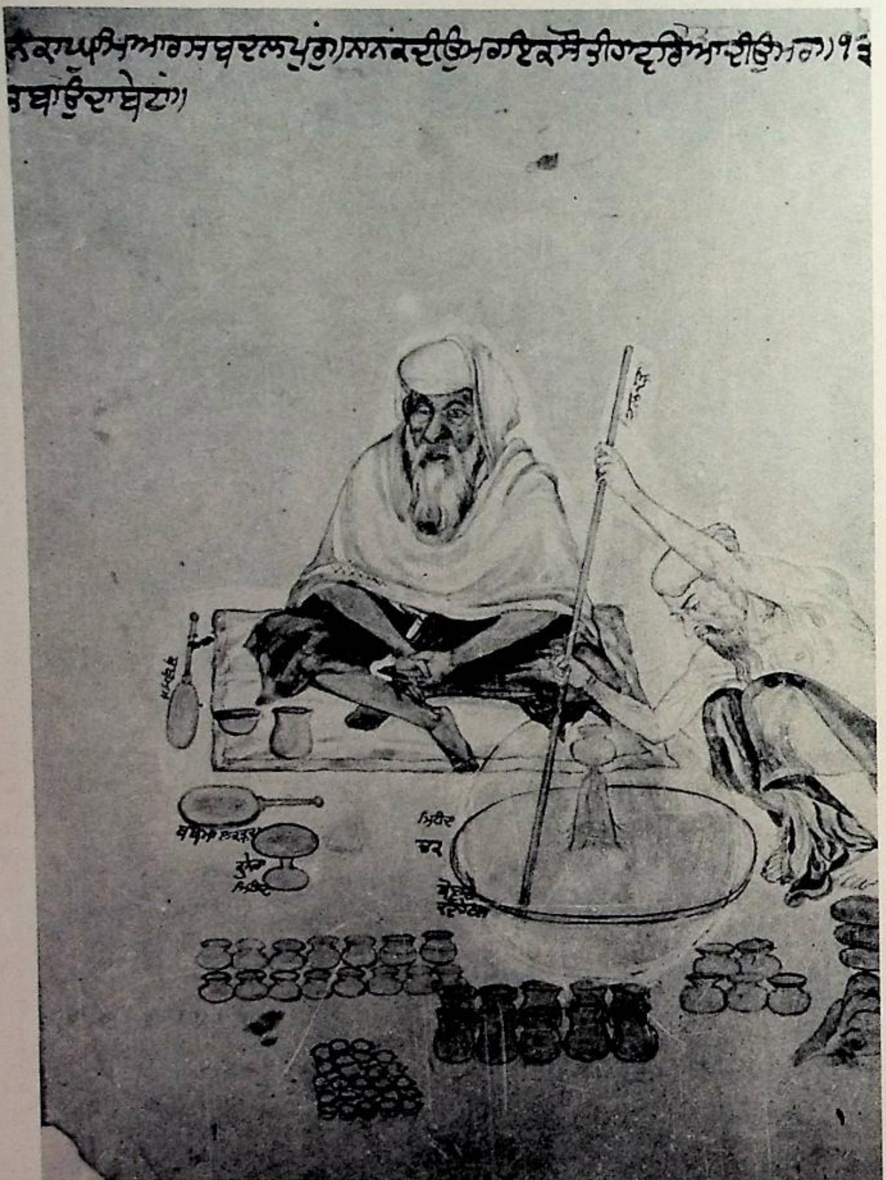
Healing . . .



An apparatus used for distillation . . .



Design and form: A peacock from a Punjab mural



The Potter

PUNJAB STATE SMALL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD.

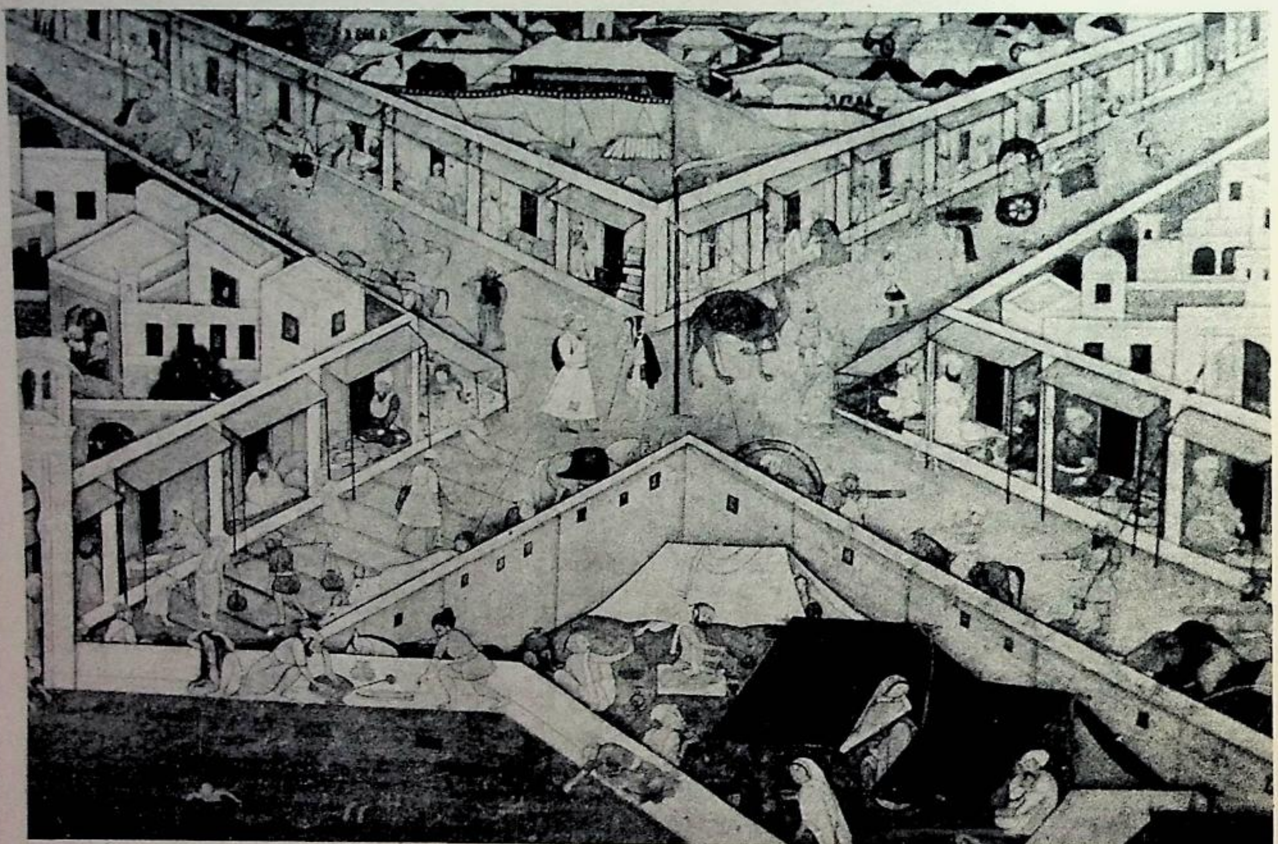


In the Cool . . .





Pictorial Indian Carpet



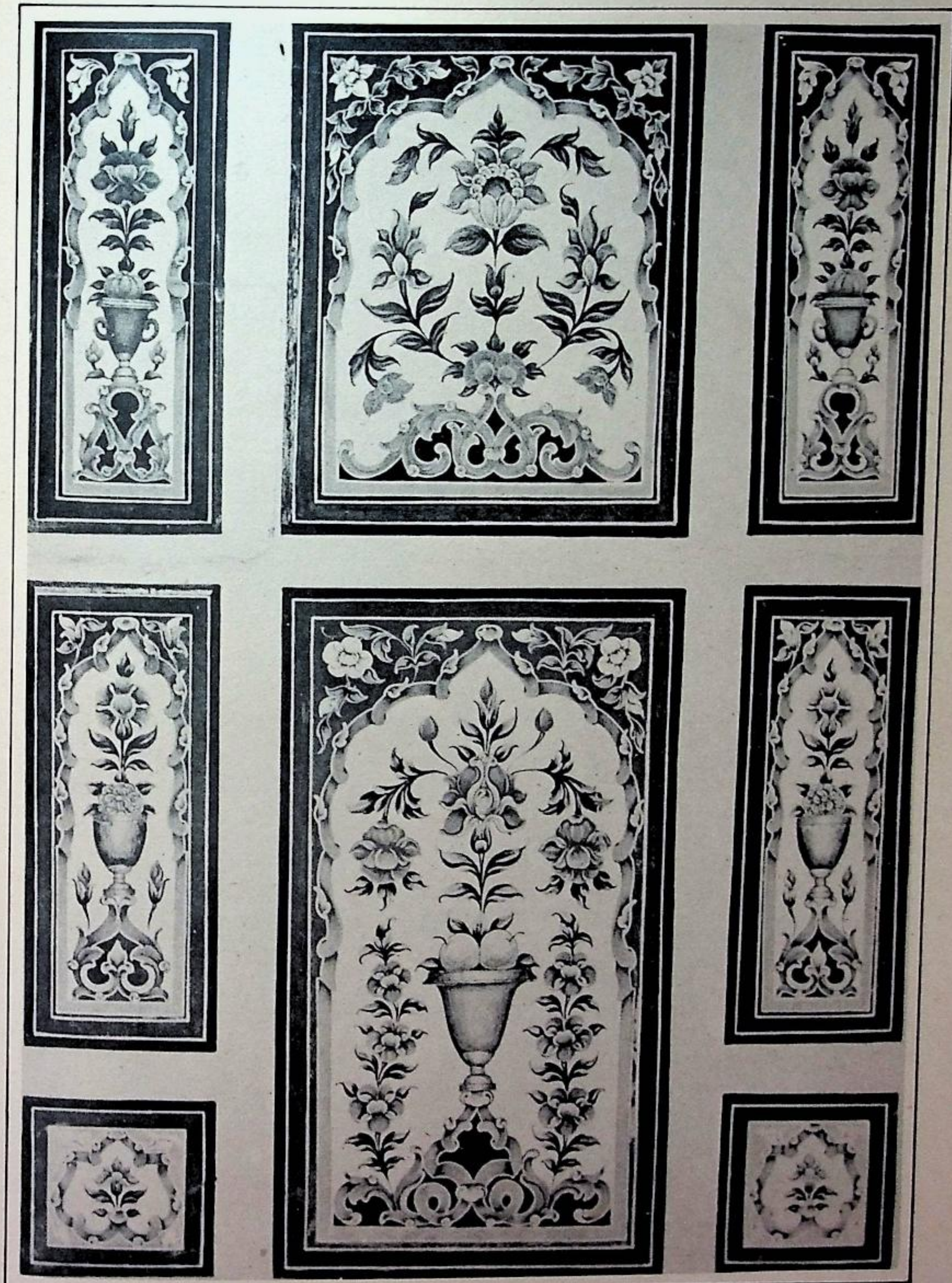
Detail from a Pahari miniature showing a market scene



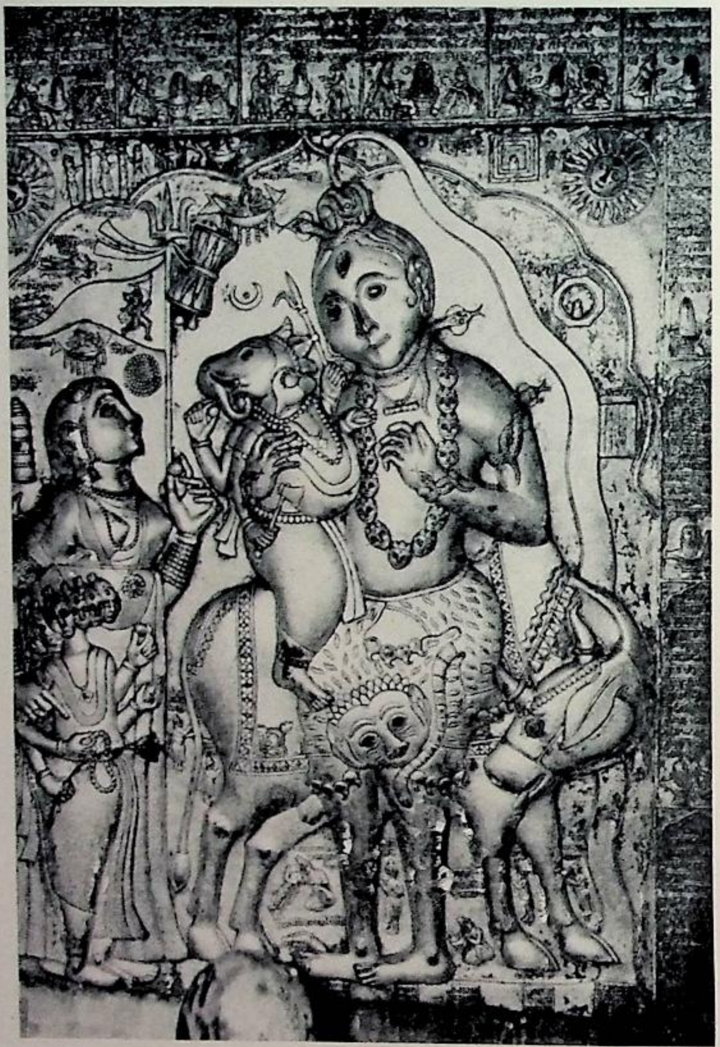
Income and Expenditure



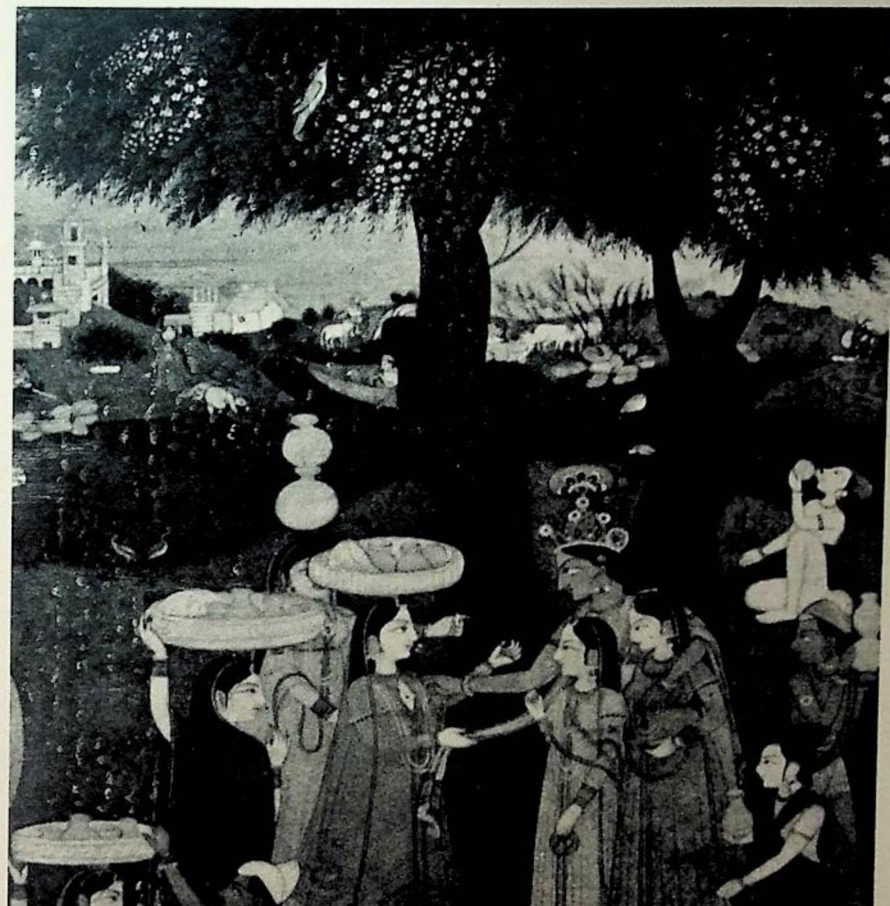
Two sides of a coin



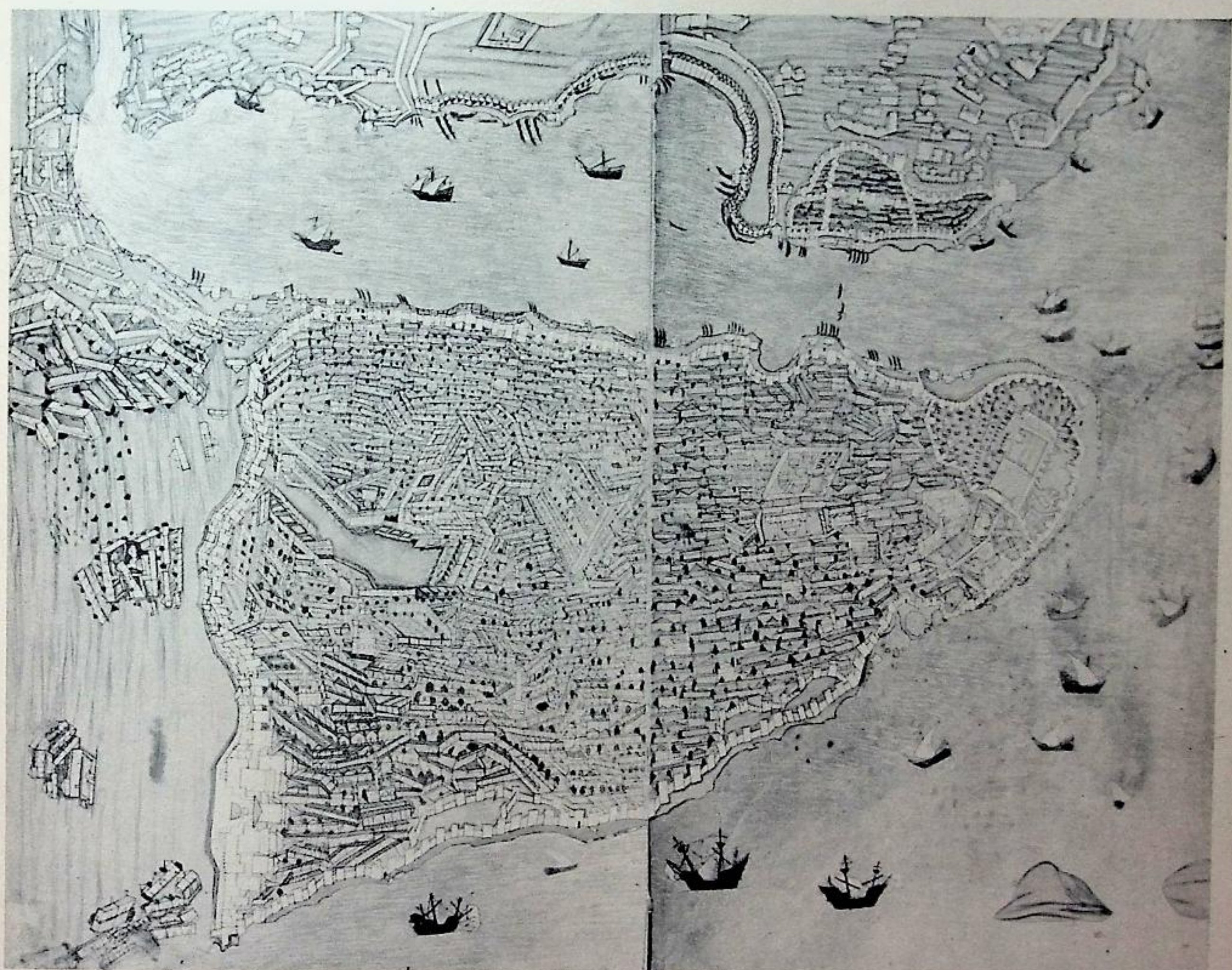
Vision of walls and alcoves in multicolour . . .



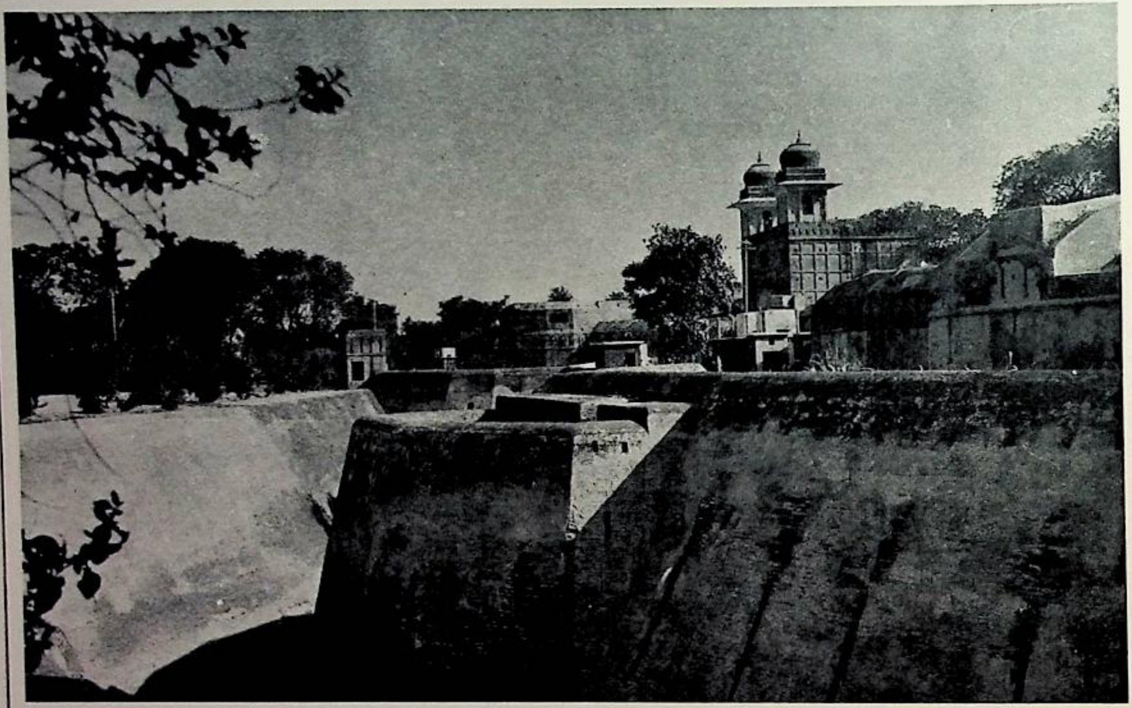
Doorway to the temple . . .
relief in brass



A Pahari miniature with traders

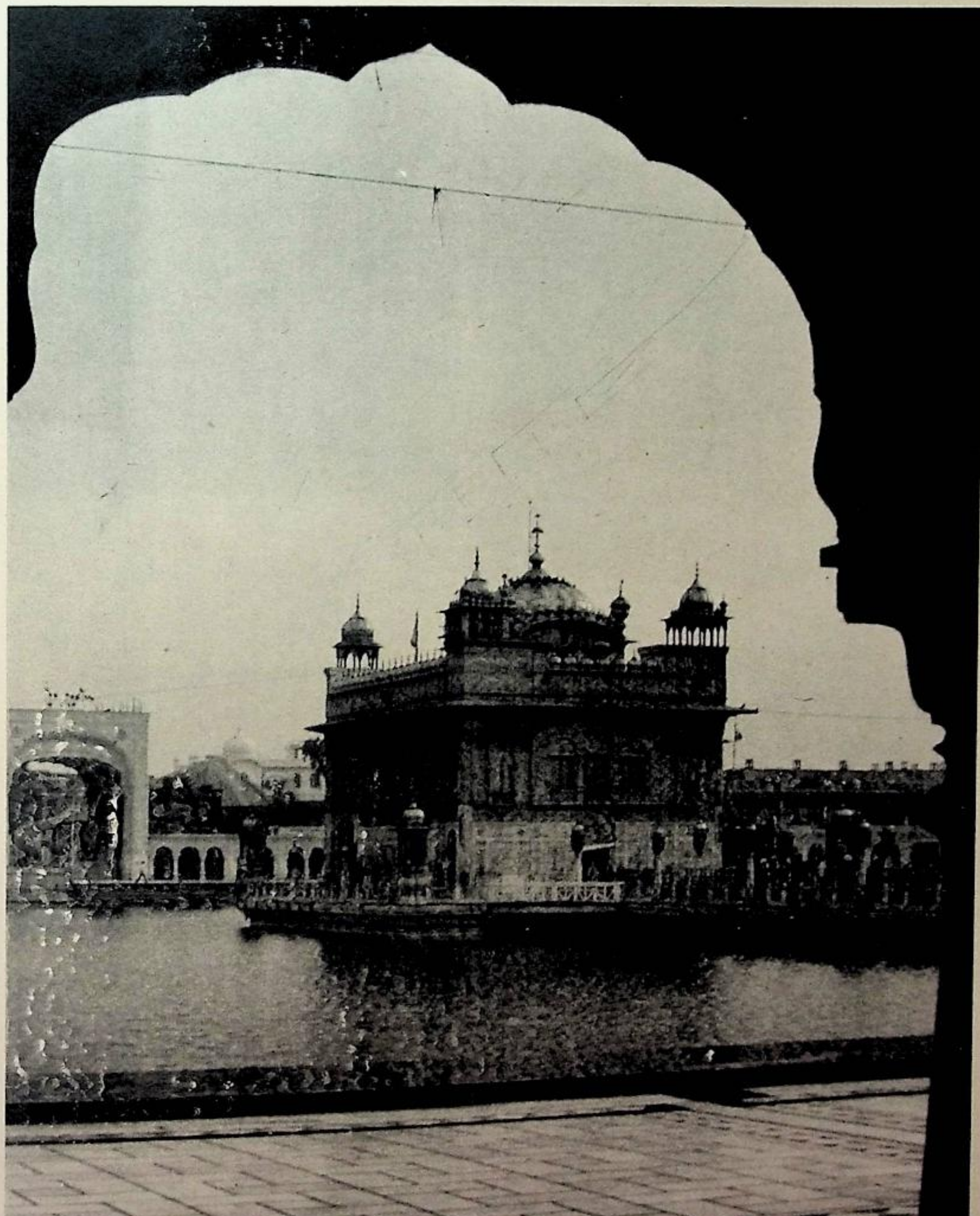


Miniature depicting a sea route



Fort built in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

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A view of the Golden Temple





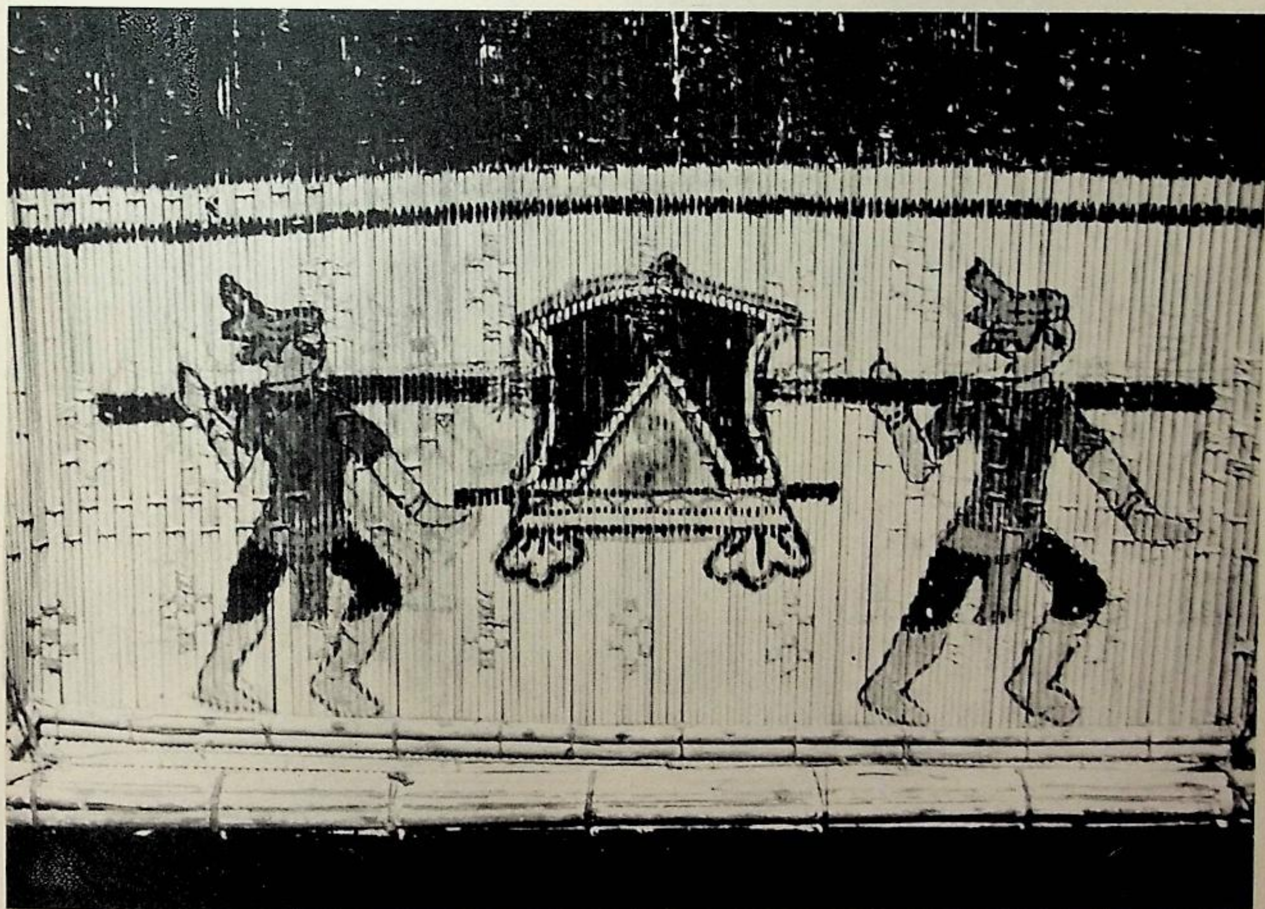




Sculptures from Dholbaha at Hoshiarpur and Patiala

Issued by the

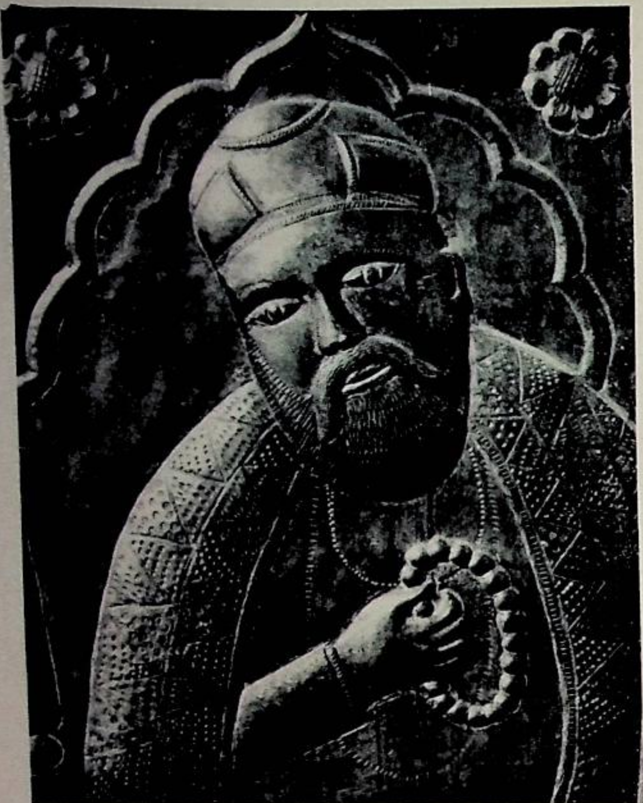
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Transportation . . .

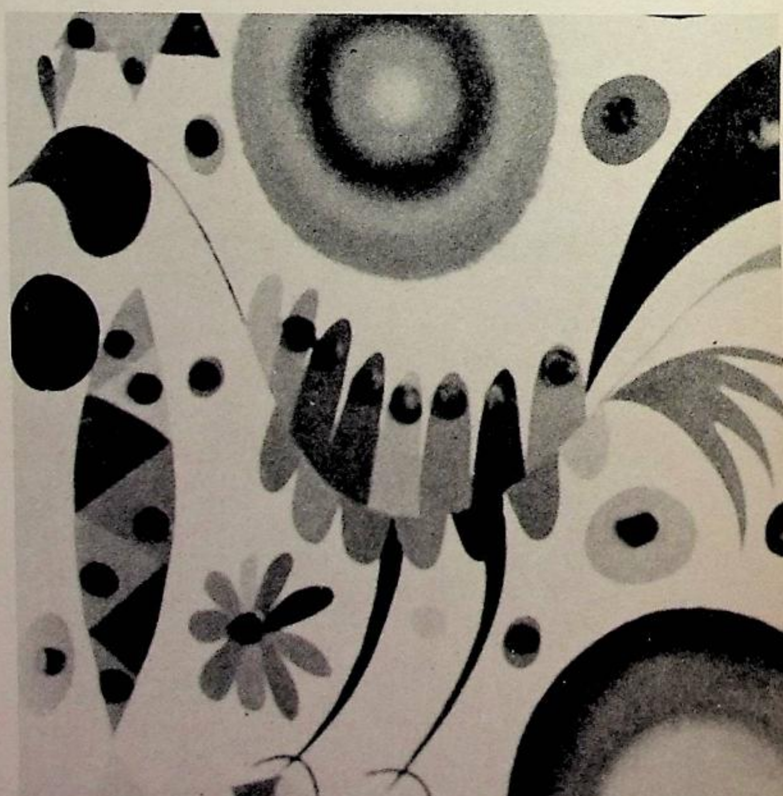
long before TELCO commmercial vehicles!

THE TATA ENGINEERING & LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY LIMITED



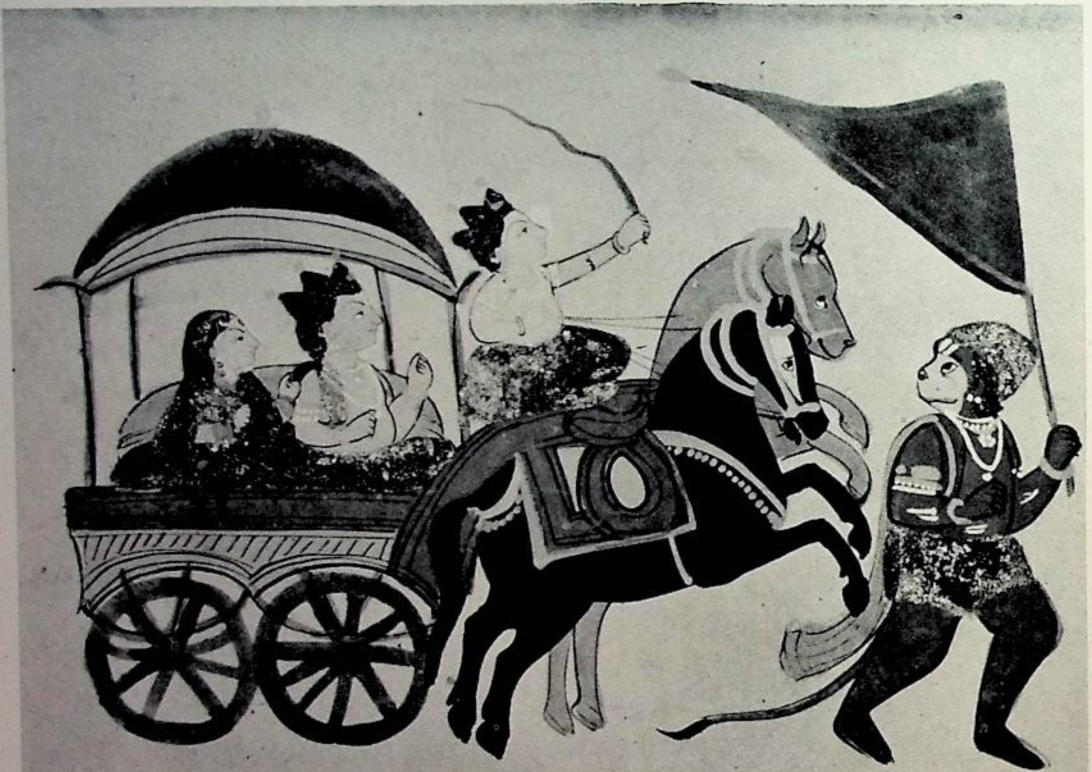
Portrait of Guru Nanak embossed on a brass plate

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY



Abstract design of a cock

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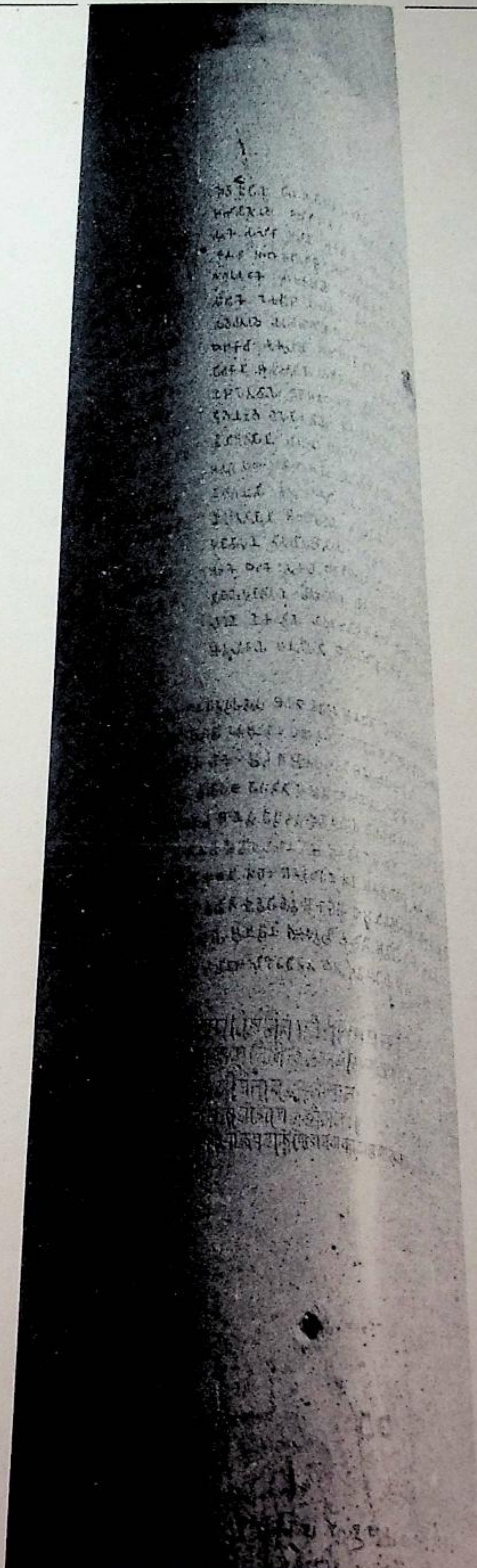


Hanuman escorting the royal couple
Folk painting from Amritsar
(Coll. K. C. Aryan)



Way to the Golden Temple

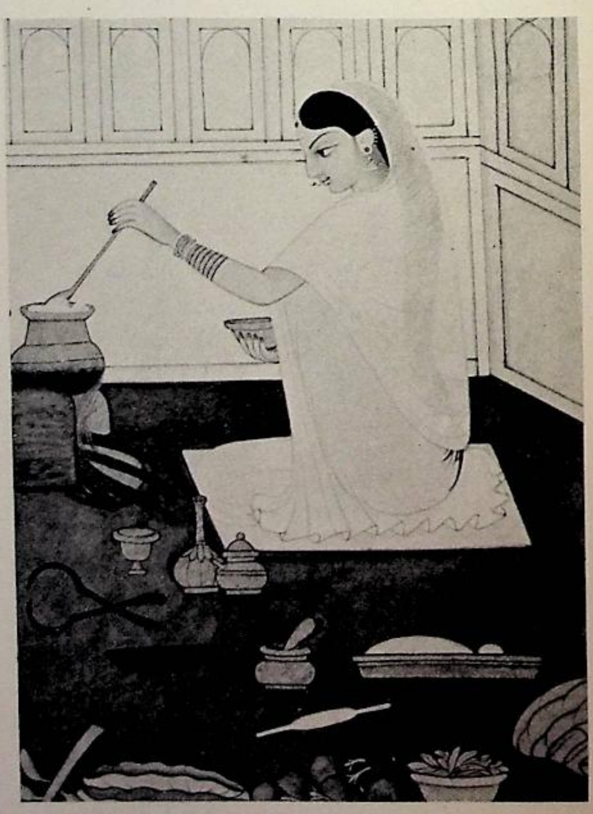
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA





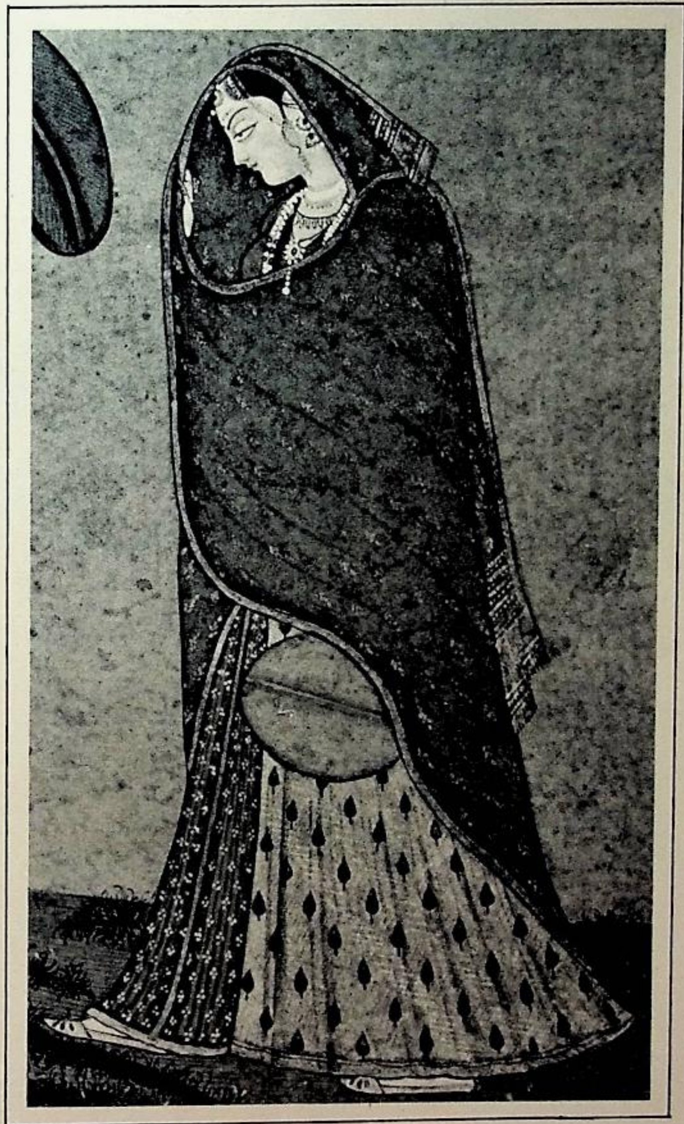
The flame of hope
and security —
a brass folk lamp

THE PUNJAB STATE CO—OP. BANK LIMITED

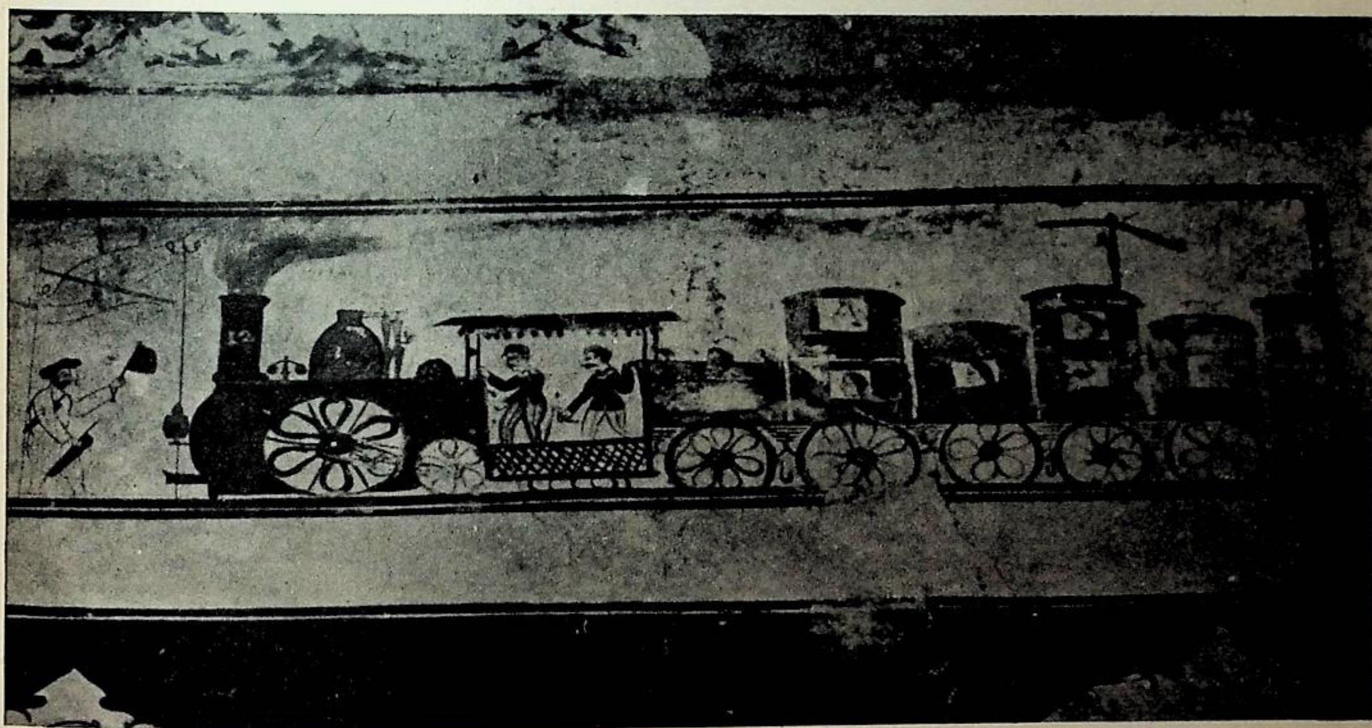


A Kangra woman cooking
(Detail of a Pahari miniature)

INDIAN VEGETABLE
PRODUCTS LIMITED



Soft as her footsteps—
lady with a pitcher
(Detail of a Pahari miniature)



Full steam ahead
(A detail from a Pahari mural)

Amritsar Express
From Bombay to Amritsar, the City of the Golden Temple

CENTRAL RAILWAY



Detail of a Turkish miniature

For many years now, Indian Oil has produced the fuel for most modes of land, sea and air transport.





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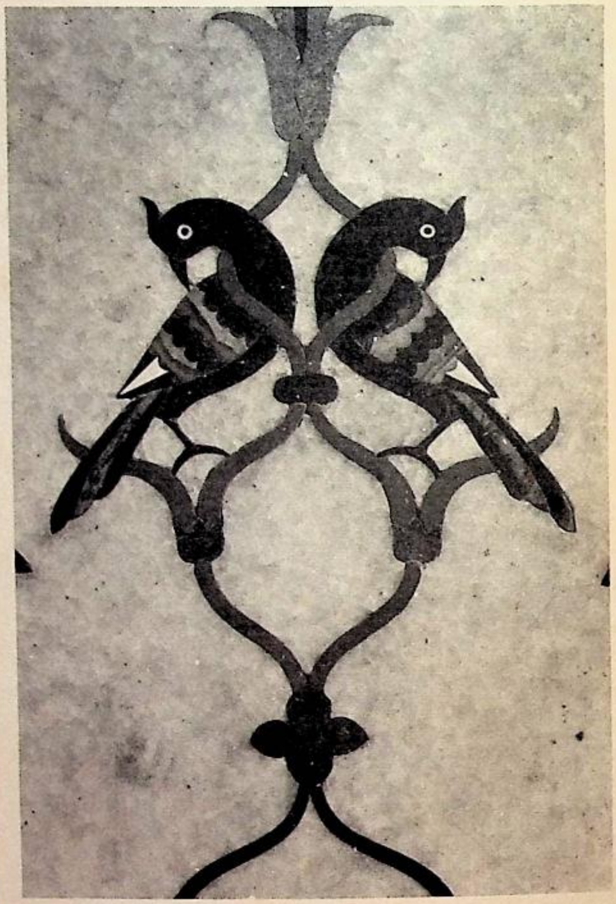
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